

THE
CHURCH'S HAPPY PROSPECT,

AND THE
CHRISTIAN'S PRESENT DUTY:

CONTAINING
AN INQUIRY
INTO

THE TIMES THAT SHALL BE FULFILLED AT ANTICHRIST'S FALL—
THE CHURCH'S BLESSEDNESS IN HER MILLENNIAL REST—THE SIGNS THAT
HIS HAPPY SEASON IS AT HAND—THE PROPHECIC NUMBERS CONTAINED IN THE 1855
DAYS—AND THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY AT THIS INTERESTING CRISIS.

IN FIVE DISCOURSES:

WITH
An Appendix.

TO THE DISCOURSE ON THE PROPHECIC NUMBERS.

ALSO
TWO ESSAYS

ON DANIEL'S PROPHECIC NUMBER OF 2900 DAYS,
AND ON THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO INQUIRE INTO THE CHURCH'S DELIVERANCE.

BY ARCHIBALD MASON,

Minister of the Gospel, Washington.

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P R E F A C E

T O T H E I N Q U I R Y .

DURING the last harvest, the Author, in ten Sermons, delivered to his Congregation the subject contained in the following pages. Corresponding to the general heads, it is now published in five Discourses. To give unity to the different branches, which were necessarily divided in the delivery, and to render the perusal more convenient, this arrangement has been adopted, without the least abridgement of what was spoken, or any material addition to it.

The Author was unexpectedly led to the consideration of this subject, by irresistible inducements, which, as they can be satisfactory to none but himself, he deems it improper to detail. A belief of the importance of the subject, a conviction of its suitableness to the times that are now passing over us, and the earnest desire of many who heard it, are the principal reasons for its publication. While he is sensible of the seasonableness of the subject, he is at the same time aware of the imperfection of the execution; on this account he solicits an indulgent perusal.

The inquiry into the times that will terminate, when systems of false religion shall be thrown down, exhibits the moral and penal evils from which mankind shall then be delivered.—The statement of some parts of the church's millennial blessedness unfolds the felicity to which, at that time, the nations shall be exalted.—By mentioning some of the signs of its approach, the saints' faith and hope may be encouraged, from those extraordinary appearances, in Divine providence.—The remarks on the numbers which are contained in the predictions, should induce believers to place their confidence on the more sure word of prophecy:—And

the exhibition of the Christian's duty, to repent and believe the gospel, ought to animate us all to make due preparation for the coming of this day of the Lord. Christ's ministers are certainly warranted, in giving to subjects of this kind a place in their public ministrations; that they may promote the glory and interests of their Lord, and may prepare his people for all those dispensations, by which Divine predictions will be accomplished.

As this subject is equally adapted to Christians of every class, and contains many things about which their minds should now be employed, it is their duty to attend to it. Without neglecting at all the great concerns of personal religion, by working out their own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure, Christians are called, both by God's word and providence, to meditate on those matters, to live in the expectation of the great things which God has promised to his church, to converse with one another concerning them, to pray earnestly for the COMING of their REDEEMER'S KINGDOM, to assist in keeping in operation the means that are employed for promoting it, and to observe attentively the doings of the Lord.

Though some, disregarding those things, may be disposed to say, "the days are prolonged, and every vision faileth;" it is his opinion, in concurrence with many others, that a solemn crisis is fast approaching, and that "the days are at hand, and the effect of every vision."

That these Discourses, by the Divine blessing, may be useful to the readers, for giving them some more "understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do," is the earnest desire of their Author.

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Preparing for the Press, and will soon be Published,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

The Fall of Babylon the Great,

BY THE

AGENCY OF CHRIST,

AND

THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF HIS WITNESSES,

IN FOUR DISCOURSES.

THE FIRST AND SECOND,

From REV. viii. 5—“ And the Angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.”

THE THIRD AND FOURTH,

From REV. xi. 6—“ These, two Witnesses, have power to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.”

AN
INQUIRY

1870



THE TIMES THAT SHALL BE FULFILLED AT ANTICHRIST'S FALL,
AND AT THE CHURCH'S ENTRY INTO HER MILLENNIAL REST.

DISCOURSE I.

MARK i. 15.—*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

IT seemed good to the Holy Ghost that some of Christ's discourses, and some of his apostles' sermons, should be very summarily reported, in the Holy Scriptures. The account of many of them does not contain a record of what was spoken, but a statement of the scope and substance of what they delivered to the Church. When the day of Pentecost was fully come; when the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance; when Peter had delivered, on that day, a most affecting discourse to the people; when his hearers were pricked in their hearts, and said, Men and brethren, What shall we do? and when Peter had given them counsel suited to their present convictions, it is added, as an account of the sequel of his discourse, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort; saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." When Paul re-visited the Macedonian churches, the history of his labours among them is given in the following words:—"And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece." The same thing is done with respect to many of Christ's discourses. While some of them seem to be given at great length, as his sermon on the mount, and his addresses to his disciples immediately before his death; others of them are mentioned in a very general way. Of that discourse

which he pronounced in the synagogue of Nazareth, after he had read from Isa. lxi. 1, 2, a remarkable prediction concerning himself, the following words contain all the account that is given of it:—"He began to say to them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Concerning that most seasonable and instructive address which he made to two of his disciples, on their way to Emmaus, this is all the scripture record:—"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself." Of this the words of our text are a striking instance. Of the early part of Christ's public ministry, and in his first tour through the cities of Galilee, this is the very summary, yet most satisfactory, narrative of his labours:—"Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God; and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." We ought to observe in all this, Divine wisdom and sovereignty. If all Christ's discourses and miracles, with those of his apostles after him, had been recorded at full length, the volume of inspiration would have been so large, that the world's inhabitants, for whose salvation it was revealed, could not have so readily searched it, so clearly understood it, so profitably improved it, nor so easily propagated it, both for the glory of its Divine Author, and for the good of themselves and others. The want of great prolixity in the sacred volume is no want of perfection; but must rather be considered as a special excellency of the Divine word. This may probably be the design of John's words with which his gospel history of Christ is concluded; "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." From the summary account which is given of some of those discourses, as well as from those that are recorded more in detail, the church may receive great instruction: so we should say concerning the information which is given in the one, and that which seems to be withheld in the other:—"Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

In the text there are the following things to which your attention must be directed :—The information which Christ gives to the people concerning the expiration of the season, which was then coming to an end—“The time is fulfilled.” The apostle Paul mentions this season, on two different occasions, in the words that follow :—

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law;” and again, “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and on earth, even in him.” This time as it is mentioned in the text, seems to have a respect to that season, as it should bring to an end that system which existed before it, and establish in its stead the gospel dispensation. In the former quotation from Paul, this time is considered as the season of those glorious transactions, in Christ’s incarnation, obedience and death, by which the former system was set aside, and the meritorious foundation was laid for supporting the economy that should be introduced. The time mentioned, in the latter quotation from Paul, contemplates the same season in its effects. The new system having been introduced, and its sure foundation laid, the Lord would begin his glorious work of gathering together in one all things in Christ; a work which he will carry on till the end of time, and perfect in glory for ever. As it is the view given of this time in Christ’s words, with which I am now concerned, to it I shall confine myself. Jesus informs the people in his doctrine, that the time was fulfilled. The time which was appointed for the Mosaic dispensation, the time for confining the knowledge and worship of the true God to the seed of Jacob, the time of types and ceremonies in the church of God, the time of the universal reign and prevalence of ignorance, idolatry and wickedness among the Gentile nations, this time was now fulfilled. The time of the church’s minority, when her members were children in bondage under the elements of the world, was now come to an end. The time that was to intervene between the giving of the promises and predictions concerning the Messiah, and their accomplishment, in his appearance in our world, is now run out. The seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel are now nearly fulfilled. This is the information which Christ intimated to the people, when he declared to them, The time is fulfilled. Had Christ’s hearers understood and believed this information, they would have recognized it as

good tidings of great joy unto all people, and would have received the blessed announcement, as Simeon and Anna did, with rapturous delight and triumph.

In the text Christ gives his hearers further information; "And the kingdom of God is at hand." He did not only assure them of the expiration of the foregoing season, and of the abolition of the ceremonial dispensation which belonged to it; but he unfolds to them the nature of the time which was now approaching, and the happy state into which the church should be immediately introduced—"The kingdom of God is at hand." The gospel kingdom is now to be erected, the Son of God has now come out of Bethlehem Ephratah, and has begun his glorious work for the redemption of men. This work he will completely finish, go to the Father, commission his ambassadors, send his Spirit to the church, establish his kingdom of grace, purity and peace, gather multitudes into its fellowship, and preserve it in the world till the end of time. All this information to Israel is included in Christ's declaration; "And the kingdom of God is at hand." By this intimation, Christ assured the Jews, that the Lord was now about to fulfil that prediction, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." This important information to Israel was the principal scope of John's message. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching, in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was the great design of the early part of Christ's public ministry, which is evident from our text. It was the substance of the apostles' ministry, while their Master was on earth; for from him they received this command, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Of the ministry of the seventy whom Jesus also sent out, this was likewise the chief end; for their commission is expressed in those words, "And say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." The design of all those intimations which were made to the Jews, by these different persons, at different times, was to prepare them for those great and astonishing alterations, which God was about to introduce.

The text represents also the duty to which the professors of religion were called, at that important season; "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Be ye exercised in a suitableness to the great change that is to be accomplished. Prepare yourselves for the coming of

this kingdom. Be ye ready to welcome, with all your heart, the glorious deliverance. Repent ye.. Humble yourselves on account of your sin, confess to the Lord your transgressions, and look to his mercy for the pardon of your iniquity. Believe the gospel. Give credit to the truths that are now revealed to you, concerning the coming of The Just One, and that kingdom which he will set up. Embrace the new revelation that is to be made, and submit to the new dispensation which is to be established. By the exercise of faith and repentance, be ye prepared for those great and astonishing operations which God will accomplish before your eyes.

These are the things to which the text did primarily refer. I mean, however, to apply it to the things that are coming to pass in our own day ; to the coming of the kingdom of God in the glory of her millennial state, and the following considerations will warrant us, in that application.

Many Old Testament prophecies, which predict the church's deliverance and prosperity, and which express the duty of her members concerning them, apply primarily to the Jews' return from Babylon, find their accomplishment, in a higher sense, at the erection of the Christian dispensation, shall be fulfilled also when the church shall enter on her latter-day-glory, and will be completely perfected in heaven. Our text may also be applied in the same way. There are three periods of the church to which the text, in all its parts, may be applied; the erection of the gospel dispensation, the introduction of the millennium, and the season immediately preceding the consummation of all things. Since the ancient Prophets declared to the people the approach of the church's deliverance from Babylon, and called them to those duties which were suited to that time ; since Christ and his apostles announced to the Jews the coming of the kingdom of God in her gospel form, and enjoined on them duties answerable to their state ; since it will be the duty and the employment of Christ's servants who shall exist in the church, near the end of the world, to apply those very words to the circumstances in which they shall be placed, saying to the people, All time is now to be fulfilled, and the kingdom of glory will soon be manifested, repent ye and believe the gospel, that ye may be prepared for judgment and eternity ; it certainly must be the duty of gospel ministers, living near the church's deliverance, and her latter-day-glory, to carry this message to mankind, by an

application of the text to their present situation, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

The meaning of scripture is one; but, as no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, it is no breach of that unity to apply them to situations and circumstances which correspond exactly with the church's condition, for which they were primarily intended. The denial of this would deprive the saints and the Christian church of much of that direction and comfort which the scriptures are calculated to give, and which they receive from them. Though there will be no change of dispensation at the latter-day-glory, as there was at Christ's appearance in our world; yet there shall be such a glorious alteration in the church's condition, as will warrant the application of the text, to the things which will come to pass in those days. Some scriptures which refer to the church in one state of things, may, by fair analogy and unforced accommodation, be applied, with equal propriety, to the church's condition which is of the same description. At the coming of Christ, a long and dreary time was fulfilled, the kingdom of God did come, and men were called to prepare for that joyful event by repentance, and faith in the gospel; so at the church's entry into her millennial rest, a most dreadful period of darkness shall come to an end, the kingdom of God will gloriously appear, and the members of the church must study preparation for the solemn season, by the exercise of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. From these considerations we are authorized to apply Christ's words in the text, to the present circumstances and expectations of the church. If it was the work of John, of Jesus, of the twelve, and of the seventy, at the death of the legal dispensation, and at the birth of the gospel economy, to proclaim to men, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe the gospel; it must also be the duty of gospel ministers, when the decease of Antichrist and the revival of the church are approaching, to sound an alarm on God's holy mountain, by applying those very words to such glorious events.

In the text, according to this application of it, there is information concerning the ending of that time which God has fixed, and which prophecy has revealed to us—"The time is fulfilled." The time that must run out before the church can be delivered from her

enemies, and advanced to her state of peace and purity. The time that must come to an end before that dreadful and systematic corruption of Christianity, which has been set on foot and maintained by the antichristian church, shall be put down. The time during which the Gentiles shall possess the court that is without the temple, and tread under foot the holy city. This time shall then be fulfilled.

We have information also concerning the deliverance of the true church, which is the object of all this opposition, and which is depressed during its continuance; "The kingdom of God is at hand." The time of the church's universal extent, glory, purity and peace is fast approaching. The time when the predictions and promises, which relate to the church's happy condition in this world, shall be accomplished, is drawing near. The season of the Lord's answering the prayers of his saints, who have incessantly cried at his throne of grace, "Thy kingdom come," is at hand.

The duty of Christians, who are living in the near prospect of this deliverance, is also contained in the text; "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Be ye diligently exercised in the duties of religion, and prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

In discoursing on this subject, it is proposed,

I. To mention some of those times that shall be fulfilled at Antichrist's fall, and at the church's entering on her millennial rest.

II. To describe the happy condition of the church during the thousand years of her glory and purity.

III. To mention some of those signs which indicate this blessed condition of the church to be at hand.

IV. To make some remarks on the prophetic numbers of Daniel and John, which are contained in the one thousand three hundred and five and thirty days, mentioned at the end of Daniel's prophecy.

V. To speak of the Christian's duty at this important crisis, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

I. I am now to mention some of those times that shall be fulfilled at Antichrist's fall, and at the church's entering into her millennial rest. This time, considered as a period of duration, is one; but, viewed in its characters, may be many. By mentioning some of its most prominent features, I am now to describe it.

1. The time for exercising secular tyranny over the nations shall then be fulfilled. Scripture predictions warrant us to believe, that the general complexion of civil government, till the time of the church's deliverance shall arrive, will be tyrannical. "Daniel's explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image, chap. ii. 36; his own vision of the four Beasts, chap. vii. 2; and John's visions in his Revelation, clearly indicate this state of things. The vision of the King and that of the Prophet relate to the same time, and to the same objects, and comprehend a period of nearly 2500 years, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar when the visions were seen, to the downfall of the Roman Beast, both secular and ecclesiastic. The golden head of the image was the Babylonian Monarchy, which was then in existence; the silver breast and arms, the empire of the Medes and Persians; the brazen belly and thighs, the kingdom of the Greeks; and the iron legs, and the feet and toes of iron and clay, the empire of the Romans. The stone which was cut out without hands, and smote the image on its feet, that part of it which represented the Roman empire in its decline, and then became a great mountain, which filled the whole earth, symbolized the kingdom of Christ. In Daniel's vision, he saw the same objects represented by other symbols. The golden head is, in this vision, represented by a lion with eagle's wings; the silver breast and arms, by a bear, with three ribs in the mouth of it; the belly and thighs of brass, by a leopard having on the back of it four wings of a fowl; and the legs, and feet, and toes, are symbolized by an extraordinary beast, which was dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, having great iron teeth, devouring and breaking in pieces, and stamping the residue with the feet of it. This beast was different from all those who were before it, as it appeared at first in the form of a republic, having ten horns, answering to the ten toes which were upon the image, in the king's vision. These frightful representations exhibit their arbitrary and tyrannical government over their own subjects, and their unjust cruelty to one another. Every one of them destroyed the empire of the one that existed before him, till all was swallowed up by the devouring beast of Rome. Before John saw his visions, three of those beasts had perished from the earth, and the fourth, or Roman beast, was at the height of its power, and therefore, his predictions were entirely confined to it. Of this beast we have an account, Rev. xiii. 1—8.

John saw it rise out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon its heads the name of blasphemy. It was like a leopard, its feet like those of a bear, and its mouth like that of a lion. It made war on the saints, and overcame them; and power was given to it over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. In John's Revelations, we find a description also of his ten horns. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb," Rev. xvii. 12—14. These ten horns are identified with the Roman beast, and their government is arbitrary and tyrannical like his own. All these predictions inform the church of God, that during this long period, the men who shall have in their hands the government of the nations, shall, in their administrations, resemble the lion, the bear, the leopard, and a great monstrous beast, having seven heads, and ten crowned horns. The history of mankind represents a full accomplishment of these predictions. It clearly proves that the prophetic picture has not been overcharged, and that every feature in it has been completely fulfilled. Although the violence of the storm may be somewhat broken, as the beast is now in its old age; yet the same spirit continues to actuate it, and as far as its power will permit, the same courses are pursued. The rulers of the earth, in general, disregarding the rights, liberties, property, and lives of their subjects, and seeking their own aggrandizement, and the establishment of their own dynasties, pursue such measures of rule, by oppression, persecution and war, as render their administration a source of calamity to men. Were we to take a view of some of the collateral visions in those books, as that of the ram and the he-goat, Dan. viii.; the devastations by Alexander's successors, Dan. xi.; or the ravages of the Saracens and Turks, Rev. ix.; it would farther demonstrate that this long and dreary season, from the beginning to the end of it, has been, and will continue to be, a time of injustice, cruelty, tyranny and blood. But shall this sword devour for ever? No; the time of its slaughter shall be fulfilled. As the predictions concerning the existence and prevalence of those beasts upon the earth have been exactly accomplished; so the prophecies concerning their destruction shall be fulfilled in their season. The time will come when the

stone "which was cut out without hands, shall smite the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and break them to pieces; when the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold shall be broken in pieces together, and become as the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind shall carry them away, that no place shall be found for them; and when the stone that smote the image shall become a great mountain, and shall fill the whole earth." The time will come, "when he that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity, and when he that killeth with the sword, shall be killed with the sword." Then the time of secular tyranny over the nations shall be fulfilled.

2. The time of Antichrist's reign in the earth, and his power over the church of God, shall then be fulfilled. The existence and dominion of this enemy are foretold by the prophet Daniel, and by the apostles Paul and John. "I considered the horns," says Daniel, chap. vii. 8, 21, 25, "and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots, and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things." "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." "Let no man deceive you by any means," says Paul, 2 Thes. ii. 3, 4, "for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of sin be revealed, the Son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Two of John's visions of this ecclesiastic beast of Rome, must also be mentioned. He saw it rise, chap. xiii. 11—"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them that dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." At the beginning of the seventeenth chapter, another vision of the same object is recorded—"So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sit on a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy,

having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornications. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration." These are some of the predictions concerning the rise, character, and conduct of the ecclesiastic beast of Rome. The history of the Romish church, and of the Popes who have been at the head of it, clearly shews, that, black and frightful as the representations are, they have not been exaggerated. It is not necessary that every feature in this prophetic drawing, should be found in this beast at his childhood, nor that they should all prominently appear in him in his old age; sufficient certainly it must be, if they are all applicable to him, in the course of his life and actings. His rising up among the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided; his pretending to be Christ's vicegerent, and the sovereign head of the church on earth; his claim to infallibility in his doctrines and decisions; and his usurping and exercising a power to depose and set up kings, and to dispose of crowns and kingdoms, fulfil many of the things that are contained in these predictions. His hatred of the true church of Christ, the thundering anathemas and violent edicts which he has denounced against her, the cruel persecutions which he has carried on against her members, the dreadful massacres of them which he has contrived and executed, and the bloody wars, which have been undertaken and conducted among the nations, on his account, or at his instigation, verify the application to him of other parts of those prophecies. The worldly wisdom which has been exercised in forming the antichristian system, the profound policy and dissimulation with which its affairs have been conducted, the support which it has received from the kings of the earth, and the wealth it has gathered from its subjects in every land, prove the same thing. The blasphemous names which he has taken to himself and bestowed on others, the abominable idolatry which he has introduced and established, the gross errors which he has contrived and propagated, the hateful immoralities which he has practised, countenanced, indulged, and pretend-

ed to pardon, demonstrate, that as face answers to face in a glass, so do these inspired predictions delineate the abominations of popery. But the time of his existence and power shall be fulfilled. Those Prophets whom the Lord employed to foretell his rise and reign, predict also his fall and ruin. Concerning the little horn, these are Daniel's words, chap. vii. 26—"But the judgment shall sit and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end." The words of Paul are equally expressive, 2 Thes. ii. 8—"And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." In many parts of his visions, John saw the fall of this system presented to him; one of them only shall be mentioned. "And a mighty Angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying: Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Such shall be the end of that lamb-horned, but dragon-mouthed beast, which has successfully propagated error, idolatry, immorality, and persecution on the earth.

3. The time of the church's low condition shall then be fulfilled. If the wicked walk on every side when the vilest of men are exalted; it is not to be supposed that Christ's church, at such a time as this, can enjoy prosperity and peace. While both the secular and ecclesiastic beasts exist, practise, and prosper, the interests of true religion must be low, and the outward condition of its professors must be afflicted. Accordingly, Scripture predictions represent the followers of the Lamb, at this season, to be "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." In these predictions the church is represented by the symbol of a woman, who, having been lately delivered of a man-child, is now persecuted by the dragon, and flies into the wilderness, with two wings of a great eagle. There she is nourished by her Lord, for a time, and times, and half a time; and is preserved in safety from the face of the serpent. She is also symbolized by two witnesses, prophesying a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth, wearing the black garb of mourners, and the coarse raiment of poverty. She is exhibited as under the power of the little horn, which prevailed against her. She is exposed, through this long season, to the wrath and cruelty of the secular and ecclesiastic

beasts, which have all along endeavoured, according to their ability and opportunities, to cut her off from the earth. "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." The history of the Christian church, under this period, verifies sufficiently those predictions, which foretell her state. During this time, the number of her members has been small, their outward situation, by the oppression and persecution of the enemy, has been uncomfortable, and her testimony, for the glory of her Lord, has been disregarded and opposed. But out of this trying condition, they shall be delivered. "And the kingdom," says Daniel, after he had spoken of the judgment that shall sit upon the horn, chap. vii. 27. "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey him." When she shall be delivered from the power of the little horn, when she shall emerge from the wilderness, finish her witnessing prophecy, and put off her sackcloth, she shall hear that call; "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." This call she will instantly obey; for John immediately "heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," Rev. xix. 6, 7, 8. At that joyful season, the days of the church's mourning shall be ended.

4. The time of Satan's deceiving the nations shall then be fulfilled. The Scriptures assure us, "that this enemy walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." Having accomplished the fall of man, by seducing our first parents, ever since that mournful event, he has reigned over the far greater part of the human family. On this account he is designated "the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." As he assaults individuals with temptations, that he may direct their personal conduct and lead them to sin; so he deceives them, as societies and nations, by

influencing their public deliberations, that he may regulate their important measures. With great success did he deceive the Gentile nations, when he tempted them to erect and submit to tyrannical governments, and gross idolatry, which have so long prevailed among them. With equal success did he deceive those nominal Christians, who were the principal instruments, in his hand, of forming the Christian religion after the model of the pagan mythology. When this transformation had far advanced, he next deceived the nations, by the revelation of the Man of sin, "whose coming was after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish." After the erection of this kingdom of darkness, he continued to deceive the nations, by causing their rulers to give their power to the beast, and their subjects to wonder after him, to countenance his idolatries, to practise his immoralities, to believe his false doctrines, and to submit to his antichristian power. He is still deceiving the nations, by making them cleave to superstition, error, and various kinds of iniquities which abound among them. The last deception which he shall practice on the nations, prior to the church's deliverance, will be when that prediction shall be accomplished; "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet: For they are the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty," Rev. xvi. 13, 14. The issue of that battle is declared, chap. xix. 20—"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him:—These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." This time shall be fulfilled, when the church shall enter into her millennial rest; according to that vision at the beginning of chap. xx—"And I saw an Angel come down from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." An attempt to renew his work, at the expiration of the millennium, will end in his entire and everlasting ruin. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," ver. 10.

5. The time of the Jews' dispersion among the nations, and of their enmity at Christianity, shall then be fulfilled. When the Jewish nation had crucified the Lord of glory; when they had rejected his gospel, the preaching of which began at Jerusalem; when they had persecuted his apostles and followers; and when they had, in all these things, done despite unto the Spirit of grace; then was that prediction accomplished on them, "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken to him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations," Hos. ix. 17. At the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Roman army, their final and complete dispersion was accomplished. Then were they entirely driven from their own land, scattered through the earth, and placed in such a situation as rendered it impossible for them to observe their Father's religion, to which they still professed to adhere. Then our Saviour's predictions were literally fulfilled on them; "And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 24. Continuing in their dispersion in all quarters of the globe to this day, they are still attached to the typical and abrogated system of Moses, ignorant of their Messiah, to whom all their prophets did witness, and enemies to his religion which brings glory to God in the highest, peace to the earth, and good will to men. Being without Christ, in their present state of unbelief, they are also aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But shall the seed of Jacob abide still in unbelief, and remain as a people, in this low and disorganised state for ever? The inspired predictions assure us of their recovery. After Hosea had feelingly predicted their dispersion, "The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim:" He triumphantly adds; "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days," chap. iii. 4, 5. As the Jews have never obtained any deliverance, that can be considered to be a fulfilment of this prediction; as it is Jesus Christ, who is David's son and Lord, both his root and offspring, whom they shall seek; as it is to take place

after a long and mournful state of deprivation of privileges, of freedom from gross idolatry, and of suffering many privations; and as the period of its accomplishment is the latter days, we may be assured that this blessed deliverance of Israel is yet to come. Daniel also predicts this important deliverance, and gives a character of the time at which it shall be effected; "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince that standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." "And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand, and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, and times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be fulfilled," chap. xii. 1, 7. The time of unexampled trouble, ver. 1, signifies the judgments at the last scene of the vials of wrath; and the Lord's accomplishing to scatter the power of the holy people, ver. 7, signifies his bringing his judgments on the Jews, both in their dispersion and unbelief, to a final termination. The complete effusion of the vials, and the restoration of Israel are so connected, that, in verse 1st, the former is mentioned as a description of the time when the latter shall take place, and, in verse 7th, the latter is stated as a mark of the season, when all these things, belonging to the last plagues, shall be fulfilled. Paul likewise predicts the restoration of the Jews, and states the means by which it shall be brought about; "Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy," Rom. xi. 3. The New Testament Scriptures, and the preaching of the gospel, which belong to the mercy of the Gentiles, shall then be made effectual, by the power of the Holy Spirit, for recovering the posterity of Jacob.

6. The time of executing God's judgments on his incorrigible enemies, shall then be fulfilled. Although those calamities are foretold by Daniel, in the triumph of the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, in the judgment that shall sit on the fourth beast and the little horn, in Daniel's own vision, and in his words which are quoted above; yet they are more particularly represented in the

visions of John. In them we have more general, and more particular, accounts of those judgments—At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, or the coming of the third and last wo, it is said:—“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come. And there were lightnings, and voices, and thundering, and an earthquake, and great hail,” chap. xi. 18, 19. A most affecting description is given of the same objects, at the opening of the sixth seal, chap. vi. The same awful scene is exhibited to our view, in the vision of the vintage, at the end of chap. xiv. These fearful calamities are also disclosed in the proclamation of the angel, and in the lamentations of those who beheld them, chap. xviii. These fearful plagues are further represented by the dreadful battle, an account of which is given in the eleven verses, with which the sixth chapter is concluded. But the most complete and systematic exhibition of them is found in John’s vision of the seven angels, who had the seven last plagues in which was filled up the wrath of God. He saw them, in chap. xv. prepared for their work, coming out of the temple in glorious attire, and receiving seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. In chap. xvi. he heard them receive their commission to “go and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth,” and he saw them execute their office, by pouring, in an orderly succession, these vials of wrath on the objects, which are destined to receive their contents. Now, all those sad calamities shall be wholly overpast, when the church shall be introduced into her prosperous state. No dregs of the vials of wrath shall remain to be poured out, no voices or thunders shall be heard, no lightnings shall be seen, no concussions of the earthquake shall be felt, no drops of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath shall be tasted, and no part of the shower of the terrible hail shall fall, when the church has entered into her millennial rest. Immediately before this happy time, the operations of the wine press shall be finished, the battle will be fought, and the cries of lamentation and sorrow shall be heard no more; for, at Antichrist’s fall, the season of judgments shall be ended.

7. The time of heathenish idolatry, and mahometan delusions, shall then be fulfilled. Many parts of the earth are still subjected to the darkness of paganism; and many portions of the globe are deluded by the absurdities of Mahomet. The pagan idolatry and many of

its rites, are so irrational and cruel, and the dogmas, and pretended revelations of the Prophet of the East, are so gross and ridiculous, that the subjection of any part of mankind to those systems, furnishes a mournful proof of the darkness and corruption of human nature. But this time also shall come to an end. The universal conversion of the nations to Christianity, which the predictions warrant us to expect, assures us that heathenish and mahometan lands shall be enlightened. The voices in heaven proclaimed, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," Rev. xi. 15. Of the song of Moses and the Lamb, this is a part:—"For all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest," Rev. xv. 4. The objects mentioned, are the kingdoms of this world, and all nations. Of them it is said, they shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and his Christ, and shall come and worship before him. The time at which this great change shall be produced on the nations is also revealed in the prophecy. At the end of the third wo, and when God's judgments are made manifest, by the execution of them. This exactly agrees with the time of Antichrist's fall, and the commencement of the church's prosperity. The manifestation of God's judgments in their execution does not only characterize the time of their change, but states also a special mean by which it shall be effected. The complete execution of those judgments will roll stumbling blocks out of the way of their turning to the Lord, and will so enlighten their minds and impress their hearts, as to dispose them to embrace that religion, of the truth of which, the pouring out of those plagues on its opposers, will be a clear confirmation. Pagans and mahometans constitute the greater part of the world's population, and occupy the larger portion of its surface. It is impossible, therefore, that those predictions can be accomplished, if pagans and mahometans continue in their ignorance and unbelief. The Old Testament contains predictions equally clear, concerning the extent of the kingdom of grace, in the latter days. "Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations," Psal. lxxxii. 8. To inherit all nations as their Creator, Preserver, and Moral Governor, is the necessary and essential prerogative of God; it, therefore, cannot be the matter of a prophecy. But to inherit all nations as the God of salvation, he being their God, and they becoming his people through the Mediator, must be the thing intended. Isaiah, when speaking of the

mountain of the Lord's house being established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, in the last days, adds, "And all nations shall flow unto it," Isa. ii. 2. Since there are predictions in both the Old and the New Testaments, which fortell the conversion of all nations to the true religion; we may be assured that the time is coming, when heathen and mahometan nations shall turn to the Lord, and when the idolatry of the one, and the delusions of the other shall perish from the earth. Besides, the Old Testament mentions places, whose inhabitants shall turn to the Lord; places which necessarily direct our minds to pagans and mahometans. Assyria, Ethiopia and Egypt, are the nations to which I allude. Of two of them it is said, "Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance," Isa. xix. 25. Of the other it is foretold, "And Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God," Psa. lxxviii. 31. Since those nations whose conversion is here predicted, are inhabited at present by pagans and mahometans, have we not abundant warrant to believe, that, at the latter day, the idolatry of the one, and the delusions of the other, shall come to an end.

8. The time of the mixture of Antichristian corruptions with the constitutions and administrations of Protestant churches shall then be fulfilled. In the prophecies of Jeremiah, concerning ancient Babylon, which was a type of popery, called Babylon the great, we have the following prediction, which applies to the latter, as well as to the former; "Behold I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth; and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take a stone of thee for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord," chap. li. 25, 26. After the destroying mountain of Babylon the great, has begun to shake and totter, and after the fire of Divine judgments has begun to consume its foundations, which commenced at the Protestant reformation, stones have been taken from her both for corners and foundations, in other ecclesiastical buildings. But after the Lord has completely rolled down this mountain from the rocks, and, by the fire of his judgments, at the time of the end, has reduced it to a burnt mountain, none shall ever after, take from it a stone for a corner, or a stone for

foundations. The former of these, is the present situation of protestant established churches. They have broken off from Babylon the great, but as she is not yet rolled down from the rocks, and made a burnt mountain in her final destruction, they have taken from her stones for corners and foundations. At the Reformation the protestant churches retained, both in their constitutions, and administrations, many corruptions which had their origin in popery. Instead of improving by time, experience, and the increase of light, they have in some things, rather deteriorated. The popish corruptions which have been admitted into the constitutions of these churches, the popish errors, which are found in the doctrine of many of their members, the superstitious rites and ceremonies which belong to their modes of worship, the antichristian laws which regulate their government, and the popish usages which are practised in their exercising the censures of God's house, are dishonouring to Christ, hurtful to the church, and grieving to serious Christians, both within and without their communion. These corruptions will continue, there is too much reason to fear, till Antichrist's fall; but when that system shall be rolled down from the rocks, and shall be made a burnt mountain, and when the church's millennial glory shall commence, every one of them, with the system which gave them existence, shall pass away for ever.

9. The time of mournful divisions among the professors of true Christianity shall then be fulfilled. The popish corruptions, which are retained in the churches of the reformation, have been the cause of those divisions, which have subsisted between them and the different bodies of dissenters. Conscientious scruples about approving and practising those corruptions, on the one side, and a refusing to let them go, or a rigorous enforcement of them on the other, have caused the greater number of those separations from the churches that are established by law. As these corruptions have been the cause of divisions between dissenters and the churches on the establishment; so they have also been the mean of producing that disunion which subsists among the dissenting bodies themselves. The different views which have been entertained of the corruptions of popish origin, by the bodies of dissenters, have divided the dissenting churches from one another. The contention between dissenting bodies has sometimes been so sharp, and the alienation of affection from one another so great, that they appear to have had more aver-

sion at the cause of one another, than at the corruptions of that church, from which they have separated, on nearly the same grounds. In popish corruptions, by which the truths, institutions, and laws of Christ, are opposed, it is very easy to find the mournful cause of all those divisions which exist among the professors of true Christianity. By those contentions, and separations, the reformed churches at the present time, are like God's ancient people—"When Manasseh was against Ephraim, and Ephraim against Manasseh, and they together were against Judah." But this mournful time shall also be fulfilled. The causes of division shall be removed at Antichrist's fall, and the divisions themselves shall cease. When the church shall enter into her millennial state, she shall enjoy that precious and most desirable blessing, which is contained in that promise; "The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off, Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim," Isa. xi. 13.

10. The time of unprovoked and offensive war, with all its ruinous effects, shall then be fulfilled. The whole time of Antichrist's reign, especially the season of pouring out the vials, has been, and will continue to be, a time either of actual war, or of the nations' groaning under its dismal consequences. Wars which have been undertaken and prosecuted, as they generally are, to gratify the resentment, to humour the pride, to increase the power, the territories, and the wealth of the rulers of the earth; to support false religion, to prevent the progress of reformation, and to fasten the yoke of oppression more firmly on the necks of the human race, bring great guilt upon a nation, and expose its population, of whatever degree, to the Almighty's wrath. In the formation of armies, great injustice is done to the young and the simple, by depriving them of their liberty, tearing them from their relations, and inuring them to habits of irreligion and profligacy. In the march of armies, injustice is often done to the persons and property of the peaceable inhabitants; and destruction marks their path. In the operations of armies, in battles, or in besieging fortified towns, what desolations are brought on the dwellings of men, what sufferings are endured by those who survive and pine away in their wounds, what blood is shed, how many lives are taken away, and what a multitude of immortal souls are dispatched in a moment to God's tribunal! By the reduction of armies, which have been collected for the purposes of war,

it often happens that those who have, by a military life, contracted habits of wickedness, spread among those, in whose neighbourhood they take up their residence, the poisonous infection of the most degrading and destructive immoralities. These wars have a mournful tendency to increase national antipathies, to augment national debt and public burdens, and to give to the dispositions and character of men a ferocious quality. Besides all this, how dreadful is that responsibility to the God of the whole earth, which those who contrive and determine, and those who voluntarily conduct such shocking scenes, bring upon themselves ! But this dark and dismal time of war, of blood and slaughter among the nations, shall be fulfilled when the kingdom of God shall come. At that happy time, that prediction shall be accomplished; "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people," by pouring on them the vials of his wrath, "and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more," *Isai. ii. 4.*

11. The time of Antichrist's wickedness, and of God's long-suffering patience with those transgressors, shall then be fulfilled. As the judgments of the vials are the punishment of sin, the time of their effusion, as well as the times going before, will be a season of abounding iniquity. When the Lord brought on the inhabitants of the earth, the waters of the flood; "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." When Judah was carried into captivity in Babylon, "the chief of the priests and the people, had transgressed very much, after the abominations of the heathen, and had polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed at Jerusalem. They had mocked God's messengers, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." When the Lord brought on Jerusalem a sore and enduring destruction, "the Jews had killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and had persecuted the apostles, they pleased not God, and were contrary to all men; forbidding them to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, and, having thus filled up their sin, Divine wrath came upon them to the uttermost." As it was in the days of Noah, of Zedekiah, and of the Jews; so shall it be with Antichrist, at the effusion of the vials. The angel of the waters said, when the third vial was poured out, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and

shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." At the effusion of the fourth vial, it is said, "And men blasphemed God who hath power over these plagues; and repented not, to give him glory." A similar account of them is given, when the fifth vial is poured out. "And they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." When the vials are finished, the same account is given. "And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." While the vials are in progress they continue to blaspheme, and when the last, and most destructive judgment is inflicted, they, like some hardened criminals among men, shall die and go into perdition, in the very act of blaspheming the God of heaven. Long has Divine patience and forbearance been exercised with that woman, whose name is, "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth;" but the time of her wickedness, and of his long-suffering with her shall then come to an end. The Angel who came out from the altar, and had power over fire, shall then utter a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe, And the Angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it unto the great wine-press of the wrath of God, And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

12. The time of the Lord's trying the faith and the patience of his saints shall then be fulfilled. After John had seen the vision of the beast that rose up out of the sea, after he had foretold his persecution of the saints, and had predicted his destruction, he adds, "Here is the patience and faith of the saints," Rev. xiii. 10. Here is the object which shall exercise the saints' patience in sufferings, and their faith in threatening of his ruin, and in the promise of their deliverance from his power. During the time of Antichrist's reign, their patience and faith shall be tried; but, when he shall fall, that season of trial shall come to an end. The nature of the Antichristian system, the violence with which it has been maintained and propagated, the sufferings of the church under its

power, its long continuance, the threatenings concerning its destruction, the promises of the church's deliverance, and the deferring of this hope, furnish abundant opportunities for the trial and exercise of the patience and faith of the saints. The system of popery being of such a nature, as to corrupt and oppose every thing in true Christianity, its precious doctrines, its simple and spiritual worship, its Divinely instituted, government, and its pure and purifying censures, the existence of it in the world must be a great trial to the saints' faith and patience. The introduction, the support, and the propagation of it, having been carried on with such a high hand, and with such extraordinary success, must also have been, and still continues to be, a distressing trial to their faith and patience. The church's sufferings in various ways, under its power and cruelty, have so severely tried their patience, that nothing but a strong faith in God, through Christ, by the promise, could have prevented the saints from fainting, in this day of adversity. The long continuance of this system adds to the church's trials. It is not like the twenty years of the Ark's partial concealment in Kirjath-jearim, which all the house of Israel accounted long, and lamented after the Lord; nor is it like the captivity of Judah for seventy years in Babylon; but it must continue, from its beginning to its ending, for the long period of one thousand, two hundred, and sixty years. The threatenings of its destruction, and the promises of the church's deliverance and prosperity furnish ample scope for exercising the faith of the saints. In the fulfilment of those predictions there may be such seeming delays, as will induce them to cry, in the language of the souls under the altar; "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, on them that dwell on the earth?" The Lord assures his people of deliverance, he intimates to them the manner of its approach, he unfolds their duty, and he declares their happiness and danger in these words; "Behold, I come as a thief, Blessed is he that watcheth," in the exercise of faith and patience, "and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." When Antichrist shall fall, and when the church shall come out of her wilderness, and shall enter into her pleasant land; then shall all those trials of her faith and patience come to an end; and she shall say, Thou hast tried me, and hast brought me forth as gold.

I shall now conclude this discourse, by mentioning some reflections, from this part of the subject.

1. From it we may be convinced of the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, and the truth of the Christian religion. I have had occasion to mention several prophecies, which are contained both in the Old and New Testaments, and men have both seen and felt their accomplishment. The book that contains them must have been written, therefore, by the inspiration of God. While the Lord claims it as his peculiar prerogative, "to declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done;" He challenges all pretenders to deity, to "shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may see that ye are gods." Has Jesus plainly foretold the dreadful slaughter of the Jews, their complete dispersion among all nations, and the occupation of their city and land by a different people; has the Lord, by the component parts of a human body, represented to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, the four secular monarchies, which should successively rule and oppress the earth, for more than two thousand years, and enabled Daniel to recover and explain the vision; did he double and diversify the vision, in another vision, concerning the same objects, to Daniel himself; did Paul foretell the rise, the character; and the conduct of the Man of sin, the Son of perdition; did John predict the rise, continuance, and actings of both the secular and the ecclesiastic beasts of Rome; have all these predictions been circumstantially fulfilled, in the providence of God; and has nothing that has the smallest resemblance to these prophecies, ever appeared among men, since the world began, and, on account of all this, are not we abundantly warranted, to believe, to embrace, and to improve the Bible, as an infallible revelation of the will of God to men for their everlasting salvation? To these prophetic witnesses to the truth of Divine revelation, it were easy to bring forward many more, especially those which relate to the Redeemer himself, and to his gospel kingdom; but those which have fallen in our way, when prosecuting this part of the subject, may certainly be sufficient. O, how irrational and inveterate must that enmity at the Scriptures be, which compels men to wrestle through those obstacles that are mercifully placed to obstruct their entry and progress on the rugged and destructive paths of infidelity! What abundant reason have these persons who believe the Scripture, to rejoice in

the word of God, and to say, every time they peruse it, **Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth!**

2. This subject informs us, that it is vain to expect either temporal or spiritual prosperity among the nations, till the word of God, and the gospel of our salvation, shall, by the power of the Spirit, subdue the earth. Till the weapons of our warfare, which are not carnal, but mighty through God, pull down the strong holds, cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, the hurt of the Redeemer's church will not be recovered. All those times, that have been mentioned, are fulfilled only at Antichrist's fall; it must, therefore, be evident, that while he exists, they will be continued. Evil and perilous times shall be the lot of the church and of the world, while the popish system remains on the earth. Till the dawning of the millennial day of light and purity, times of a quality opposite to these cannot be introduced. The defiling nature of popish errors, idolatry, and immoralities, renders this impossible. The execution of judgments on men will be continued, while that system exists; and, therefore, permanent prosperity and peace, either in our temporal or spiritual concerns, are not to be expected. One scene of judgments shall come to an end, only to make way for the entrance of another equally distressing; the truth of which is now verified in our sorrowful experience. Let us beware then of seeking or promising to ourselves great things; for the Lord will yet bring evil upon all flesh.

3. The absolute need which the nations have of civil, as well as ecclesiastic reformation, is evident from this subject. In the xiii. chap. of the Revelation, we have an account, first of the secular, and afterwards of the ecclesiastic beast. They both united in blaspheming God, in corrupting religion, in persecuting the church, and in enslaving men. Popish abominations could neither have prevailed nor continued, without the support of the secular beast; nor could he have maintained his tyranny over the nations, without the aid of the ecclesiastic monster. They have gone hand in hand, they have co-operated cordially in the execution of their unrighteous designs, and have, by the unity of their operation, succeeded in their gigantic enterprises. The corruption, therefore, exists both in the civil and ecclesiastic departments. At the fall of Antichrist, civil and ecclesiastic rulers shall cordially unite, in promoting the

good of nations, and the prosperity of the church. When the Jews returned from Babylon, there were, at one time, Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the governor of Judah; and, at another time, Ezra the priest, and Nehemiah the Tirshatha, who co-operated cordially in the work of the Lord. It shall be so, when the church is delivered from Babylon the great. At that blessed day, ministerial "Angels shall fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach, to the men that dwell on the earth;" and the ten horns which John saw upon the beast, "these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

4. From this subject we may clearly see the nature of the times in which we live. Antichrist still exists, many of the kings of the earth are yet giving their power to him, and every part of his system is in full operation. All the times which shall be fulfilled, and come to an end, at his downfall, must, therefore, be still in existence. We live in times of secular tyranny, and ecclesiastic domination; when the church is low, when Satan is deceiving the nations, and when the Jews are yet scattered, and in unbelief; while God's judgments are falling upon men, and heathenish idolatry and mahometan delusions are prevailing in the world; when the reformed churches are defiled with popish corruptions,* and when divisions prevail among the lovers of the Lord; when the nations are still learning war, when God's patience is still exercised to his antichristian enemies, and the church's fiery trial is continued. Both as to sin and danger, our times, therefore, must be evil and perilous. Christians have great reason to adopt the exercise of David, "Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast," Psal. lvii. 1; and to say with Paul, "I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost

* The civil Magistrate's supremacy over the church, the consubstantiation of the Lutherans, the antisciptural episcopacy of some of them, the civil power of the Lord's spiritual, their formal liturgies, their kneeling at the Lord's supper, their using the cross in baptism, the antichristian law of patronage, their substituting pecuniary fines instead of public censure, their deposing from the ministry some of Christ's faithful servants, and their acquittal or slightly censuring those who have taught the most pernicious errors, are some of the popish corruptions with which Protestant churches are contaminated. These are the evils which assimilate our churches to the popish system, and not the personal imperfections of some weak and uninformed Protestants; imperfections which have been of late, most injudiciously, contrasted with the constitutional abominations of the Church of Rome.

witnesseth in every city, saying, That bonds and afflictions abide me." Let us all endeavour to add with him; "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy," Acts xx. 22, 23, 24.

5. That popery is ruinous to mankind, and will prove the destruction of those civil dynasties which support it, must be very evident from this part of our subject. It is ruinous to the temporal, but especially to the spiritual concerns of men. It detains them under slavery, and spiritual bondage. It keeps them in ignorance; it involves them in idolatry; it encourages them in sin, and it exposes them to Divine wrath. The threatening which is denounced against its incorrigible votaries is dreadful:—"And the third angel followed them, saying, with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his right hand; The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation: and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb," Rev. xiv. 9, 10. It will be the ruin also of the kings of the earth:—"And I beheld then," says Daniel, "because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." It is not said, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake, it was broken and destroyed; but because of its words the beast himself out of which it grew, the Roman secular tyranny by which it was supported, was slain, and his body, with this horn in its head, and all the other horns among which it sprung up, was destroyed, and given to the burning flame. The blasphemy, idolatry, and wickedness of popery shall be the cause of ruin to the kings on the Roman earth. With this prediction, several parts of John's visions do perfectly agree. The capture and destruction of the beast and the false prophet, or Antichrist who was signified by the little horn, are not the only effects of the great battle between Christ and Antichrist; but we are assured, that, as the consequence of it, "All the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven shall eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great," Rev. xix. 18. All this misery shall overtake them because they have been partakers

of her sin, and shall, therefore, receive of her plagues, Rev. xviii 4. Their great sin against God, and the principal cause of his judgment on them, are found in their giving their power to the beast, by making the existence and profession of his religion, essential to their civil constitutions, and its support and prosperity a chief object of their administrations. By the one, they devote their power to Anti-christ; by the other, they exercise it for him. Oh, that the kings and judges of the earth knew their sin and danger, in giving any countenance or support to this mystery of iniquity; and that they would "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and they perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

6. The happiness of the church in her millennial state, is evident also from what has been said. Since all these times shall then be fulfilled, the church will be prosperous and joyful. Those things which shall be removed at that time being the very bane of all civil and religious society; the church must be blessed, when they shall depart from the earth. None of those evils shall then remain; for Antichrist having fallen, their time shall be fulfilled. The happiness of the church, on the removal of those evils, must be very great. There shall be nothing to hurt nor to destroy in all God's holy mountain. Though this is only the negative part of her prosperous state, yet it is both necessary and very considerable. The spiritual salvation of believers comprehends a deliverance from those evils to which they were exposed, as well as the enjoyment of those blessings to which they are advanced; so shall it be with the church at that happy time. She shall be delivered from those evils under which she has long groaned, and shall be advanced to the enjoyment of those blessed privileges which are provided for her. The part of the subject which has been discussed, unfolds the former; and that part of it on which we are next to enter, may give us some view of the latter. In the mean time, let us seriously consider the church's distress and danger while those evils are continued, and her happiness and safety when the time of their existence shall be fulfilled; that by searching the Scriptures, meditation, prayer and religious conference, we may be prepared both for suffering according to the Divine will, and for rejoicing at the prospect of those glorious things which are spoken concerning the city of God.

AN
INQUIRY

INTO

THE CHURCH'S HAPPY CONDITION DURING THE THOUSAND YEARS
OF HER GLORY AND PURITY.

DISCOURSE II.

MARK i. 15.—*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

WHEN men are agreed about the reality and general nature of any object, and are not of the same mind as to some material circumstances and qualities which belong to it; their descriptions of it may be very different, and even contradictory. The one class will be disposed, to give such an account of it, as does not sufficiently embrace and exhibit its excellencies; and the other may carry their description of it, above its real properties. The low representation of the former, may excite the other to exaggerate its glory; and the lofty account of the latter, may influence those of a different opinion, to underrate its value and importance. It has happened thus with the church's blessed condition, which the Scriptures warrant us to expect, at the latter day. While some writers have given a description which is too grand, by ascribing to it things which the Scriptures do not reveal; the representations of some others have certainly been too general, and have fallen short of its great and peculiar splendour. In conducting an inquiry into this subject, it were desirable, could it be attained, to avoid extremes, either on the one side, or on the other.

Having endeavoured to mention, in the foregoing discourse, some of those times which shall be fulfilled at Antichrist's fall, and at the church's entry into her millennial rest. I am now,

II. To describe the church's happy condition, during the thousand years of her glory and purity.

1. The holy Scriptures and the preaching of the gospel, accompanied with Divine influence, shall then be enjoyed by all nations. These are blessings which are absolutely necessary, and infinitely precious. To what other cause than the enjoyment of them, can we ascribe the religious, moral, ecclesiastic and political improvement of the nations who are privileged with their light? Whence is it, that most absurd and abominable systems of religion, gross and abounding immoralities, and civil and ecclesiastic tyranny prevail in popish, pagan and mahometan nations, where those blessings are not enjoyed? Scripture prophecy foretells the spread of spiritual light among all nations, by bestowing on them the Divine word and a preached gospel. This was intimated to Abraham and frequently renewed, "In thee, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Isaiah and Micah predict, that "in the last days, all nations shall flow into the mountain of the Lord's house." Isaiah and Habakkuk say, "That the knowledge of the Lord, and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea." Our Saviour declares, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come," Matth. xxiv. 14. In John's visions, it is declared that "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ:" that "All nations shall come and worship before the Lord;" and that at the beginning of the church's prosperity, the saints who shall praise the Lord for that deliverance, shall be, "of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues." What less than these enjoyments, can be imported, in that prophetic description of this happy time, by the symbols of satan's binding, the saints' sitting on thrones, reigning with Christ, and the wicked not living, all for the long period of a thousand years. When the word of God, and the preaching of the gospel were put in operation, after Christ's ascension, they were the mean of enlightening many in every land to which they were sent, in the knowledge of the only way of salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ. When the gospel had thus begun to illuminate mankind, nothing did prevent it from enlightening the whole world, but that dreadful corruption of Christianity, that ended in the establishment of the Antichristian apostacy, which has prevailed so univers-

ally, and has continued so long. The change produced on the nations by the labours of the apostles, and of those who succeeded them, cannot be considered as a full accomplishment of those predictions. It was but a part of the nations that was then enlightened, it was only a small number of their population that submitted to Christ's sceptre, the church was still exposed to persecution, the time of its continuance was of short duration, and it took place before the existence of the grand apostacy; all which is inconsistent with a full accomplishment of those predictions. We are, therefore, warranted to expect this complete fulfilment, at the time of the destruction of that wicked one, whose rise and reign prevented gospel light from spreading, and filled the world with darkness. The change which the nations shall undergo, according to those predictions, is of such a nature, that nothing can accomplish it but the Divine word, and the preaching of the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. What else can be the mean of causing them to be blessed in Christ, the seed of Abraham; to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord; to flow into the mountain of the Lord's house; to become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ; to come and worship before the Lord; to celebrate his praise, in a triumphant song, for his marvellous works in their deliverance; and to sit on thrones, and reign with Christ, a thousand years. We may, therefore, most confidently expect, that after the fall of Antichrist, all nations shall be enlightened with the word of God, and the preaching of the gospel; "when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven fold, as the light of seven days."

2. The kingdom of Christ shall then be erected, and the pure worship of God shall be celebrated, in all nations. Of their enjoyment of the Divine word, and a preached gospel, these shall be the happy effects. The kingdom of Christ shall be established in the nations; for, at that time, they shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ. This honour and blessedness of the nations are imported in those parts of the church's song; "Thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned—Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down."—"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." By the grand solemnities of a coronation, and by those of a royal marriage,

is represented to us, the erection of the gospel kingdom among the nations. The instituted worship of God in Christ shall then be celebrated in all the earth. All nations, seen in a blessed company standing on the sea of glass, with the harps of God in their hands, "All nations shall come and worship before them." With a view to this happy season, Malachi, the last of the prophets, utters, in the name of the Lord, this delightful prediction:—"For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." The parties who are concerned in this prediction are the Gentiles and the heathen, nations who had not been called by his name. The employment in which they should engage is stated; offering incense to the Lord's name, and a pure offering. The spiritual worship of the gospel church is signified by the incense and the pure offering, words taken from the services of the old dispensation, under which the prediction was given. The extent of these religious services among the nations is also affirmed;—From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, and in every place. On all the nations that are enlightened with the light of the natural sun, on them shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings. The reason of this glorious change in the condition and religious employment of the nations is also contained in the prediction. For my name shall be great, by the revelation of the word, and the preaching of the gospel, accompanied with the Spirit's influence. For my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. The nature of that worship which all nations shall then give to the Lord may be distinctly learned from this prophecy. As the burning of sweet incense before the Lord, and the bringing offerings unto him, were of Divine institution under the law, so the acts of religious worship, which shall then prevail in all the earth, shall not be those which originate in human device, but shall be such as are instituted in the word of God. The kingdom of Christ is erected, and Divine worship is celebrated in a land, when inhabitants cordially receive and publicly profess the faith of Jesus; when they acknowledge themselves to be taught by him as their Infallible Prophet, to be redeemed by him as their great High Priest, and to be governed by him as their Monarchical King; when they set up among them the

instituted administrators of Divine ordinances, pastors and teachers, helps and governments; and when they carefully observe all the ordinances of Divine worship, and submit to all the administrations of his spiritual kingdom which he has established among them. This shall be the blessedness of all lands, when the kingdom of God shall come.

3. God's ancient people, the Jews, shall then flourish in the midst of the earth, as an holy and prosperous Christian church. The apostle Paul assures us, in the xith chapter of his epistle to the Romans, that though they have been diminished, yet they shall in due time enjoy a fulness; though they have been cast away, there will also be a receiving of them, which shall be to themselves and others as life from the dead; though they were broken off, they shall again be grafted into their own olive; though God hath shut them up in unbelief, he will yet have mercy upon them; though blindness in part has happened unto them, yet all Israel shall be saved, and there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; and though the Gentiles have obtained mercy through their unbelief, yet the time shall come, when, through the mercy of the Gentiles, they also shall obtain mercy. It is quite natural to suppose, that, when the darkness and misery of their rejection shall be finished, and when the happy time of their spiritual illumination in the knowledge of Christ shall come, their faith in his gospel which they have rejected, their love to his person whom they have blasphemed, their obedience to his law which they have transgressed, their zeal for his glory which they have profaned, their admiration of his grace which they have despised, and their attachment to his religion which they have opposed, will be altogether singular and extraordinary. At that time they shall obtain a complete deliverance from all the misery which is contained in the threatening, that, for so long a period, has been executed on them. Their unbelief and dispersion, with the evils which proceed from both, comprehend it all. They shall be delivered from their unbelief, when Christ shall come by his word and ordinances, applied to them by the Holy Ghost, to give them a sight of their guilt and danger, to manifest himself savingly to them, to implant faith in their hearts, to enable them to believe in him, to take away all their sins, and to give them an interest in the blessing of Abraham, and in the sure mercies of David. This work, the glorious Deliverer

will carry on among them, till the body of that people shall repent and believe the gospel, and till it grow up to a national salvation. They shall also be restored to their own land, and continue as a blessing to the rest of the nations, in the midst of the earth, till the end of the world. Our Saviour's prediction, concerning the Jews, contains two proofs of their return to their own land. "They shall be led away captive into all nations." The dispersion of the Jews is, therefore, a part of their punishment. When the Deliverer rescues them from their misery, he must turn back their captivity like streams in the south, otherwise the seed of Israel, after they are turned to the Lord, must still exist under a very conspicuous part of their calamity. Our Saviour adds, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled." The times of the Gentiles are fulfilled at Antichrist's fall, at the conversion of the Jews, and at the church's entry into her state of glory and purity. This prediction, therefore, assures us that from the destruction of Jerusalem, in the first century of Christianity, to the fall of Antichrist in the nineteenth, Jerusalem and the holy land shall be possessed by a people, very different from the seed of Abraham; and we have seen the exact fulfilment of the awful threatening. But this prediction further assures us, that when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, none of them shall any more tread down Jerusalem; but they shall surrender it to its former possessors. If the Jews do not return to their own land at the latter day, then the Gentiles must continue to tread it down, or occupy it, after their times are fulfilled, which is contrary to our Saviour's prediction. The words of Daniel prove the same thing; "And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be fulfilled." God's scattering the power of the holy people signifies the period of their dispersion, when they continued without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, and without an ephod. His accomplishing to scatter their power must, therefore, mean their being gathered to their own land, and existing in it as an independent power, both in their civil and ecclesiastic capacities. Without this, the scattering of their power cannot be accomplished, or brought to an end. Many Old Testament prophecies fortell such a return of Israel to their own land, as would never be followed with a general dispersion, or a partial captivity. "Thou shalt no more be termed forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate,"

2. lxii. 4. "Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more. Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation," 17, 20. "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God," Amos ix. 15. "And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited," Zech. xiv. 11. These predictions assure us that the Jews shall enjoy a glorious return to their own land, after which they shall never be forsaken, nor their land become desolate, after which no strangers shall pass through them any more; after which they shall never be pulled up out of their land; and after which there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. As the Jews, in their present state, are deprived of all the privileges which those predictions promise them; there must be another restoration to their own land contemplated in those prophecies; a restoration, after which they shall possess it till the end of time. We are, therefore, authorized to believe, that when the Lord shall set up an ensign for the nations, on the gospel millennial day, "He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth," Isai. xi. 12.

4. Great purity shall be obtained both in the civil and ecclesiastic constitutions and administrations which shall then exist in the world. In that happy time, Christ's church, both Jew and Gentile, "shall suck the breasts of kings, and they shall be their nursing fathers, and their queens their nursing mothers;" and "the kings of the earth shall then hate the whore;" they will, therefore, discountenance false religion, and encourage and support that which is of God. The restraints which shall be laid on Satan, the overthrow of popery, the spread and knowledge of the holy Scriptures, and the great increase of true religion and morality, will all contribute to accelerate and confirm civil and ecclesiastic reformation. An important change shall then take place in the constitutions and administrations of civil governors. Their constitutions shall no more be popish, prelatic, or erastian. The conditions on which they shall receive their power, will not oblige them to maintain, and to be members of popish, or superstitious churches. An antichristian supremacy over the church shall no longer be given to them, or exercised by them as an inherent or constitutional right of their crowns.

The exercise of their power in their administrations shall be of such a kind, that the ravenous beasts of the desert, or the horns of a monstrous animal, shall not, in any sense, be the appropriate symbols of their government. In the dispositions and conduct of the kings of the earth, at that glorious season, the words of David shall, in a high degree, be verified;—"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of the Lord. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain," 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4. As the millennial nations shall become "an habitation of justice," so the Christian churches, at that time, shall be "a mountain of holiness." The church's doctrine shall then be evangelical and sound, her worship pure and spiritual, her government shall be regulated by the word of God, and her censures shall be administered according to the Divine rule, for the glory of God, the good of the offender, and the edification of all. Every thing in the house of the God of heaven shall then be conducted according to his law. Popery, error, superstition, persecution, infringing on the rights of the Christian people, divisions, and abounding immoralities, shall be, to the millennial churches, former things, that have passed away. At that time the Redeemer's kingdom shall look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. The saints shall have in their hands all civil and ecclesiastic rule. After the judgment shall sit on the beast and the little horn, "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens," all kinds of authority through the whole earth, "shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." In John's vision of the same object, he saw them on thrones, living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. Filled with the knowledge of God and love to his glory, conscious of their obligations to act according to the law and the testimony, and studious of the welfare of men, and the good of the church, such rulers, though they had the opportunity, could not have the inclination to pervert the government, either in church or state.

5. Universal and permanent peace, both among the nations of the earth, and the churches of the living God, shall then be maintained. It is mentioned as the effect of all nations flowing into the mountain of the Lord's house, when it shall be established on the

top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, that "they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This vision is doubled, in the prophecy of Micah, because the thing is true, and shall be fulfilled in its season. This prophecy cannot be accomplished while there exists on the earth any of the four secular monarchies, which were represented in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image, and in Daniel's vision of the four beasts; the time of its accomplishment, therefore, is yet to come. The distinguishing mark of the season of its fulfilment is stated by Isaiah and Micah in the following words:—

"And many nations shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." These words, which can only receive their accomplishment when the scriptures, and the preaching of the gospel, shall enter all nations; as they characterize the time, so they state the grand instrumental cause of this universal tranquillity. The purifying and peaceful influence of the gospel, on the rulers and inhabitants of the earth, shall be so powerful, as will dispose them to live peaceably with one another, to love as brethren, and to seek the universal happiness of mankind. When the nations are enjoying comfortable peace, the churches of Christ will not be distracted with religious discord. Ecclesiastic peace, as well as national tranquillity, is predicted for that happy time. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them; and the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den." To show that those astonishing symbols of harmony and peace, relate to ecclesiastic concord, it is added; "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." To shew likewise that the instrumental cause of ecclesiastic peace is the very same with that which produces national tranquillity, it is also said; "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," Isa. xi. 6, 7, 8, 9. We are not to imagine that those

prophetic symbols are hyperbolical exaggerations; for there shall be many instances of persons of different situations, principles and dispositions, joyfully harmonizing at the church's deliverance, which will be as great a mystery in grace, as the things mentioned in the prophecy, were they to happen, would be a wonder in nature.

6. The number of the world's inhabitants, and of God's saints shall then be exceeding great. The inhabitants of the earth shall then be greatly increased. This is evident both from scripture and reason. It is confirmed by the word of God. The scriptures assure us, that when a people are the objects of Divine favour, and when they endeavour to walk in his way, that a great increase of their number is a blessing, which he will bestow on them. After the rebels were destroyed in the wilderness, their posterity, to whom the promise of enjoying Canaan was accomplished, obtained this blessing; for to them Moses said in the plains of Moab, "The Lord your God hath multiplied you, and behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude," Deut. i. 10. God's promise to his people is, "I will multiply them, and they shall not be few," Jer. xxx. 19. To Israel does Ezekiel say, chap. xxxvi. 8, "As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the Lord." The ordinary inhabitants of the waste cities should resemble, in their number, those who were in Jerusalem, when the greater part of Israel's male population repaired to it, at their solemn feasts. If the Lord acted in this manner to Israel, when they enjoyed his favour and walked in his fear; we have abundant reason to conclude, that the nations of the earth, when they shall be converted to Christianity, and shall live according to the doctrines and precepts of the true religion, will then enjoy an extraordinary increase of inhabitants. The principles of reason, as well as the promises of God, support this conclusion. If secular misrule, ecclesiastic oppression, cruel wars, famines, pestilences, destructive immoralities, and such other things that waste a nation's population, shall then be banished from the earth; it must follow as a necessary consequence, that mankind will rapidly increase, and that their number will become exceedingly great on the face of the earth. But the number of the saints also will be greatly increased. The visions that John had of the millennial church, and which he records at the middle of the seventh chapter, and at the beginning

of chap. nineteenth, clearly shew that the saints, in those days of blessedness and rest, shall be very many. In the former of those representations, his words are the following:—ver. 9, “After this,” the vision of the sealed company, “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” While the saints who were sealed, are represented by an hundred forty and four thousand, those who shall rise up in the church at the beginning of the millennium, are said to be a great multitude, which no man can number, out of all the nations of the earth. As far as an hundred and forty and four thousand are exceeded by a number that baffles all human calculations; so far shall the number of the saints, at that time, exceed the number of them, who have lived in the age before it. In the other vision, their number is mentioned in the first and sixth verses. “And after these things,” the lamentations of the kings and merchants of the earth, and the captains and sailors on the sea, over Babylon’s fall, “After these things, I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of mighty waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” How loud, how solemn, and majestic is the voice, of this much people, of this great multitude, who shall then worship and praise the Omnipotent God! The number of the singers may be understood from the loudness, the solemnity, and the majesty of the song. As all nations shall know and profess the true religion, there is reason to conclude that a great part of their inhabitants shall be true believers, and the saints of the Most High God. Since all nations shall be enlightened with the word, and the preaching of the gospel; and since every land shall possess a greater number of real christians than ever existed in any land of equal population, since the world began; the number of the saints, at that time must be altogether inconceivable. Such, however, is the idea of their number, which the scriptures warrant us to entertain. How glorious and frequent must conversion then be! The apostolic success will then be revived, continued, and exceeded. As it is difficult, in the present state of the world and the church, to be a Christian in reality; so it will be, difficult, in the

condition to which the church and the world shall then be advanced, for any person to be an hypocrite, or a nominal professor.

7. The holiness, the religious exercises and blessedness of the saints shall then be of the most exalted order. As their number shall be exceeding great, their spiritual attainment shall be very high. John's two visions of the millennial church referred to already, for an account of their number, must be considered again, that from them we may learn the nature of their exercises and attainments. As they warrant us to conclude that their number will be immense ; so they prove that their religious enjoyments will be extraordinary. In those visions, their dignity, their position, their attire, their employment, their associates, and their entertainment, are disclosed to our view. When the glorified church was after this revealed to John, her dignity was marked by her relation to her Lord—"Come hither, and I will shew thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife ;" so when the millennial church is set before him, her dignity is asserted in the same manner—"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made herself ready." Though true believers, and the church of God have, in every age, enjoyed this blessed relation to their spiritual Husband ; yet there shall be such peculiar solemnities attending the celebration of the nuptials between Christ and his millennial church, as will reflect on him the highest glory, and confer on her the greatest dignity.—They shall also have an honourable position. John saw them "standing before the throne, and before the Lamb." Having been brought to the throne of grace, they stand before him who sits on it, and before him who is in the midst of it ; they approach to God through the blood of the Lamb ; they devote themselves to God and the Lamb, and depend, for all Divine influence, on "the seven Spirits who are before his throne." John saw them also "in heaven." Delivered from the earth, and advanced to the spiritual heavens, they shall enjoy that state of the church, which bears the nearest resemblance to the heavenly glory, that can be attained in this world.—When presented to John in vision, "they were clothed with white robes, and had palms in their hands. And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white ; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Freed from the defilements of the foregoing season, they now appear in a holy and purified state. Clothed with Christ's righteousness, adorned with regenerating

grace, and beautified with the sanctification of the Spirit, they are justified in their state, faithful in their profession, and holy in their conversation. They also had palms in their hands, as the symbols of victory over Satan, Antichrist, and all other enemies; as the tokens of triumph before God and the Lamb; and as the ensigns of peace and rest in their blessed condition.—They are also described from their employment: They are not engaged in fasting, mourning and girding with sackcloth, for the Bridegroom is with them, and the days of their mourning are ended. They “cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God, and unto the Lamb.” The great voice of much people said, “Alleluia, Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. And again they said, Alleluia.” “And the four and twenty Elders, and the four Beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia.” The voice of the great multitude cried, “Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth; Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come.” In these words, there are four periods of singing. The first, when the judgments of God against his enemies shall assume a decisive aspect; the second, when they shall be terminated in the destruction of Antichrist; the third, when the millennial church shall visibly appear; and the fourth, when she shall obtain consistence and stability. The reasons assigned for these different songs demonstrate the truth of this statement. The first is sung for the Lord’s judging the great whore; at the second, her smoke rose up for ever and ever; the third is connected with a call to the servants of the Lord, and to those who fear his name, to engage in the work of praise; and the fourth song is sung on account of the reign of the Lord God Omnipotent, and the coming of the marriage of the Lamb. These exercises of religion are of the highest kind, thankfulness, praise, adoration, exalting and magnifying God. These characterize their spiritual frame from which they proceed, their holy thoughts of which they are the expression, and their heavenly deportment to which they have a powerful tendency to excite them. These exercises of praise demonstrate their bright views of the Divine glory, their deep impressions of his omnipotent power, their high sense of his mercy and faithfulness, and their vehement desire to shew forth the praises of him, who, both in their conversion, and in the church’s deliverance, has called them out of darkness into his

marvellous light.—They will have active associates in this delightful work. They will not sing alone. “And all the Angels stood round about the throne, and about the Elders and the four Beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God; saying, Amen, Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen.” If the holy Angels participate in the joy of the rising millennial church, the spirits of just men made perfect will neither be ignorant nor silent, on this solemn occasion.—Their entertainment is also mentioned; for they shall be “called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” The spiritual provision, on which the saints have all along been fed, shall be administered to them in a plentiful manner. On Christ the bread of life, on the fulness of the blessing of salvation shall they delightfully feed. With the marrow, and fatness, and goodness of God’s house they shall be satisfied abundantly. For the exercise of grace in their hearts, for the performance of religious duties, for the habitual nature of their spiritual frames and enjoyments, for the holiness of their conversations, for their love and usefulness to one another, and for the extent of their knowledge, the strength of their faith, the fervour of their love, the warmth of their zeal, and their comfortable death, the millennial saints will be peculiarly eminent.

8. The goodness of God to the world’s inhabitants, in the provision he will make for their bodily wants, shall then be great and astonishing. Among the many judgments which the Lord hath threatened to inflict on nations for their iniquities, famine is frequently mentioned; and among the calamities which guilty nations have suffered on account of their transgressions, it has often been one of the most distressing. In the holy scripture, and in the common history of mankind, we have abundant information, that famine has often been God’s rod, for the punishment of his rebellious creatures. Many of the sins of men, which provoke the Lord to anger against them, consist in their abuse of his outward goodness; it must therefore, be a righteous dispensation of providence, to deprive men, in a greater or lesser degree, of that Divine bounty which they use to his dishonour. Besides, for the sin of despising the bread of life, God’s taking away from us the bread that perisheth, is a most appropriate correction. But when that happy time shall come, in which the greater part of men shall be

holy, those promises shall be accomplished; "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, and ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen," Ezek. xxxvi. 29, 30. One of Sion's songs, in which the inspired writer contemplates the latter-day-glory, contains the following words:—"O, let the nations be glad, and sing for joy. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, will bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him," Psalm lxvii. If the Lord caused the land of Canaan, small as it was, to yield abundant sustenance for the many thousands of Israel, when their ways pleased him; shall he not make the earth bring forth and bud, and yield fruits of increase for the comfortable support of its inhabitants, when it shall be filled with the knowledge of his glory, as the waters cover the sea? Of the millennial church it shall be said, "Blessed of the Lord shall be their land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the precious things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills; And for the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof; and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush;"—all those blessings shall come upon the head of those generations of the righteous, and on the top of the head of those whose lot shall fall in that day, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. God's goodness to them in temporal things will bear some proportion to his peculiar kindness to them in spiritual things. Living under the influence of the gospel, walking in the fear of the Lord, and enjoying the comforts of the Holy Ghost; "they shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord their God, who hath dealt wondrously with them; and they shall never be ashamed."

9. The glory of God shall then be illustriously manifested to the children of men. When the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; when the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; when it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy

and singing; and when the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, which shall be the spiritual condition of all nations at the latter day, then they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of their God. Jehovah's glory and excellency the saints shall see, by contemplating both his works of judgment against his enemies, and his works of mercy in behalf of his church. Of the church's singing, Alleluia, and ascribing to him salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, this is the cause; "For he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." In these strange acts the saints shall understand, admire, and praise the Lord for the displays of the glory of his wisdom, sovereignty, justice, power, holiness, and faithfulness. In the wonderful deliverance he will work for his church, in her vast extent, her high elevation, the number of her members, the glory of her privileges, and the fulness of blessings which shall be enjoyed by believers, the saints shall see the glory of all those attributes, in connexion with the brightest display of his goodness, mercy, love, and grace, to his own people in Christ Jesus. Of this glory of the great God, in those wonderful events which the church shall behold, the minute accomplishment of his own predictions, and the exact fulfilment of his promises and threatenings, will be a most delightful display, and a special object of their contemplation. In those glorious works, they will see his word realised, and will clearly discern the time, the manner, and circumstances, of accomplishing those important predictions, concerning which we dare not now positively determine, and can only see as through a glass darkly. In the view of his admiring saints, O what glory will then surround him, as the God of providence, as the king of nations, as the God, the Father, and the Portion of his church! To them will that call be peculiarly applicable, and the reason assigned for it, completely verified; "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." At this happy time, as well as at the important season to which our text did primarily apply, that promise shall be eminently fulfilled; "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," Isai. xl. 5. At this time the Lord, in a most singular manner, will build up Zion; and when he does so, "he shall appear in his glory." As the

manifestation of his glory is one of the greatest blessings which God bestows on men; so a spiritual sight and impression of that glory is one of the highest attainments, to which the church, or the children of God can reach. Since, therefore, the displays of the Divine glory, at the millennial day, shall be peculiarly eminent, the spiritual felicity of believers at that time must be inconceivably great.

That the displays of the Divine glory, at this time, will be altogether extraordinary, is evident from Daniel's vision of it, chap. vii. 9, 10. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery flame issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened." In these verses, the representations of the Divine glory at the fall of Antichrist and the revival of his church, are set before us in such a manner, as bears a strong resemblance to the appearance of his glory, at the final judgment of the last day. John's vision which corresponds with this, is found Rev. xi. 14—19. At the time of this judgment, the Son of Man shall ask, and the Father shall give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession:—"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," ver. 14. At the time of this judgment, the Great God shall punish his anti-christian enemies:—"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end," ver. 26. And at the time of this judgment he shall give reward to his servants:—"And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," ver. 27. In all these solemn transactions, at Antichrist's fall, the Lord's glory shall eminently appear to his millennial church.

10. The glory of Christ, the Mediator, shall then appear in a very bright and wonderful manner, to the children of men. He who is represented, in the visions of Daniel, as the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven, to the Ancient of days, and receiving from him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all nations and languages should serve him, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion

that shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," shall then appear in his glory unto men, as the prophet, priest, and king of his church. This prediction, concerning the peculiar aggrandizement of our Mediator, relates to the period of time which we are now contemplating; because this season of his glorious manifestation to men will come at the fall of Antichrist, and at the church's enlargement in her millennial state. The former of these is evident from verse eleventh, in Dan. vii where the vision is recorded: "I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body was destroyed, and given to the burning flame." The latter description of this time is also clear from verse eighteenth; "But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever." At the time when judgment shall be executed for pulling down civil and ecclesiastical corruption and tyranny, and at the time when the church shall receive deliverance, enlargement, and prosperity, at that very time the glory of the Lord Jesus shall be brightly displayed among men. This blessed day will not be the commencement of his reign, nor the beginning of the display of his mediatorial glory to his people; but it will be the season of a more remarkable exercise of his power, and of a more illustrious display of his glory. Having overcome all his antichristian enemies, having bound the Dragon who is called the Devil and Satan, having sent his word and gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth, having received the subjection of all nations to the sceptre of his grace and rule, and having begun to execute his offices in the establishment and prosperity of his church in all nations, and in the spiritual salvation of believers of every kindred, tongue, and people, he will then make such manifestations of his glory, and of the glory of God in him, as will fill the earth with the knowledge of it, as the waters cover the sea. In the number of places where it shall be displayed, in the multitude of persons to whom it shall be manifested, and in the bright discoveries that shall be made of it to every believer, Christ's glory will then be peculiarly illustrious. The Lord Jesus will then, by his word and Spirit, manifest himself in such a manner, and will, through the medium of the word and ordinances, be discerned by his people with such bright illumination, in the glory of his person as God manifested in the flesh, in the glory of his offices, general or particular, in the glory of his

righteousness for the justification of believers, in the glory of his fulness for supplying his church and his children's wants, in the glory of his salvation which contains the blessings of eternal life, and in the glory of his administrations to his church both on earth and in heaven, as will constrain them to cry out, "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He will be glorified in the overthrow of his enemies; for they shall fall by "the wrath of the Lamb." He will have honour in his church's song; for they will say, "Salvation to our God that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb." At that time also he shall perform a glorious work for his people's comfort and salvation, "For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

11. The glory of the Holy Spirit shall then be most illustriously displayed in the church. This Divine person is called the seven Spirits, which are before his throne, from whom, as well as from him who is, and was, and is to come, and from Jesus Christ, grace and peace come to the saints. In his enlightening, purifying, and warming influences, he is represented by that most significant emblem of "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." The seven eyes of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, "are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." At that blessed season, the Spirit of God shall be sent forth, in a peculiar manner, into all the earth. The sphere of his special operations shall then comprehend the whole world. The subjects of his gracious influence shall then be in all the earth. The effects of his glorious power, in the conversion, sanctification, comfort and establishment of sinners in the ways of God, shall then be conspicuous in all nations. Those words of God shall have, at that time, a more extensive accomplishment, than ever they had in the days of the apostles:—"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." The influence of the Holy Spirit was exerted, and his glory was displayed in reviving the church, after she returned from her captivity in Babylon. Zechariah was commissioned to say, "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Haggai, who prophesied at the same time, was sent to declare to Zerubbabel, to Joshua the high Priest, and to all the people of the land, to strengthen and en-

courage them in the Lord's work; "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." If the Holy Spirit was glorified by his operations among the captives, when they returned from Babylon; how much more gloriously will he manifest himself, when the Christian churches shall be delivered from Babylon the great, and when all nations, through his influence, shall bow to the Redeemer's sceptre? At the erection of the gospel dispensation, he also performed glorious administrations. At the day of Pentecost, there appeared unto the apostles cloven tongues, like as "of fire, and it sat upon each of them; And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." When the apostles afterwards were enduring much persecution, and were assembled for solemn prayer, it is said: — "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." Acts iv. 31. When the apostles preached the gospel through the world, it often happened, that the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word, communicating to many saving grace, and to some extraordinary gifts. If the Holy Spirit performed such glorious operations, and exerted such Divine influence, for overcoming Jewish prejudices, for removing Heathenish darkness, and for establishing the Christian religion, we may certainly conclude that he will perform similar operations, and will exert the same influence, when "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him." To this truth an holy apostle gives a direct testimony:—"And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume by the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming," 2 Thes. ii. 8. The Holy Spirit, accompanying the word with Divine power; exhibiting to men the glory of Christ as a saviour, and displaying to them the glory of God in him, shall be the Great Efficient cause of destroying the abominations of Popery, and of establishing the Redeemer's kingdom in all the earth. Then shall the Spirit of the Lord appear in the glory of his distinct personality, of the divinity of his character, and of his special work in the scheme of redemption. Then shall all nations be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; And then the

grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost shall be with them all, Amen.

12. All this blessedness, which has been mentioned, shall be the church's enjoyment, not for a short space, but for a very long time. When we are assured that the time, which is fixed for our enjoyment of any good, is very short, it will diminish both its value, and our pleasure in the possession of it. But when we know that the time of our enjoyment of it is long, it augments its worth in our estimation, and enlarges our satisfaction in the fruition of it. The saints' happiness, at this blessed time, will be increased, by the consideration of the long continuance of their prosperity and peace. The number by which this season is marked in the visions of John is one thousand years. Whether this number signifies exactly so many years, or a long time, cannot be positively ascertained; but, from either of these views of it, we may be assured that the church's glory and purity will be continued for a very long time. That opinion, however, which considers each day in the thousand years, to signify a year, by which the duration of the millennium is extended to three hundred and sixty thousand years, being out of all proportion to other prophetic numbers, and to them all put together, has not, so far as I know, been adopted by many. This number of one thousand years is mentioned six times in as many verses, at the beginning of Rev. xx. It is mentioned in ver. 2d, to fix the time during which Satan shall be bound; it is mentioned again in ver. 3d, to state the time in which he shall be restrained from deceiving the nations. The same number is repeated in ver. 4th, to mark the duration of the church's living and reigning with Christ. It is still mentioned in ver. 5, as stating the time in which the rest of the dead, or the wicked, lived not. It is contained in ver. 6th, to describe the time during which, those who have part in the first resurrection, shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him. It is brought before us, for the last time, in the 7th verse, to shew that when it shall expire, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, for a little season. As no other prophetic number is ever used in Scripture, to represent the church's blessedness in the latter day, as it is always employed without any alteration in its form, and since it is so clearly and frequently applied to the different things that are connected with that happy season, there seems to be some reason to conclude, though it must not be asserted positively, that the

church's state of happiness and prosperity will continue exactly one thousand years, and may perhaps constitute the last day in the week of time, and the millennial sabbath, which the Lord our God hath blessed and sanctified for himself.

With some inferences, this part of the subject may be concluded.

1. Christ's kingdom, in this world, shall be victorious over all her enemies. By the light of Divine predictions and promises, we have seen some of the great things which are prepared for her; she shall, therefore, be victorious. The church may be low, but deliverance and enlargement are secured to her. Since Christ her glorious Head, has spoiled principalities and powers, and has triumphed over them; since every believer in him shall be made more than a conqueror through Christ Jesus; the church as a body shall also obtain the dominion. The purpose and promise of her God, the purchase and power of her Saviour, and the quickening Spirit who dwells in her, secure to the church victory and triumph over her enemies. Indeed, the enemy may say,—“ I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.” But in the appointed time, “ He will blow with his wind, the sea shall cover them, and they shall sink as lead in the mighty waters.” Embrace the promise by faith, live in the hope of its accomplishment, and beware of doubting the church's deliverance and prosperity; for of old time, He hath declared with great solemnity,—“ As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord,” Num., xiv. 21.

2. The change that will take place among men, at the coming of the kingdom of God, shall be exceeding great. As the alteration of the circumstances of Israel, from what they were in Egypt, or in the wilderness, was very great, after they were possessed of the land of promise; as the change in their situation from their being captives in Babylon, to their dwelling safely in Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, and in the country which flowed with milk and honey, was very great; so the change in the church's condition, when she is delivered from spiritual Egypt, and from Babylon the great, and brought into her millennial rest, shall be incomparably great and glorious. The change on the Jews shall be extraordinary, when

they shall emerge from their unbelief and dispersion, return to the Lord, and take possession of Canaan. To the Protestant churches the change shall be remarkable also, when they shall receive that deliverance, which shall be like life from the dead. By the removal of popish darkness, idolatry, and wickedness, and by their obtaining the word, the gospel, the worship, and the salvation of God, the change on the Antichristian nations will be most conspicuous and beneficial. What an alteration will be produced on the mahometan world, when the mussulmans shall be delivered from the absurd doctrines, the irrational precepts and carnal promises of their Impostor; and shall enjoy the light of the glorious gospel of the grace of God! How great will be the transformation that shall be made on pagan nations, when they shall be turned from their gross ignorance of God, their irrational and cruel idolatry, and their abominable wickedness, to the knowledge and worship of the living God! All nations shall then be changed both in their ecclesiastic and civil interests, and placed under the reign of religion and righteousness. By the grace and power of God, the righteousness and intercession of Jesus, the Divine operations of the Holy Ghost, and by the word, the ordinances, and providences of the Most High, shall these changes be produced among men. How important, how advantageous, and how desirable must those changes be! How earnestly should we pray without ceasing, "that his way be known upon the earth, and his saving health among all nations!"

3. The privileges and enjoyments of the church, in the latter day, shall differ from those of the church in the foregoing ages, not in kind, but in degree. Whatever the church shall then possess, we really enjoy the same, as it were in miniature. Every gospel privilege and christian enjoyment which belong to us, shall be inherited by them in its highest perfection. No new dispensation of Divine grace to men, shall then be introduced: but that dispensation shall be perfected, both in its extent and in its efficacy. No further or additional revelation of the Divine will, shall then be enjoyed, nor is it necessary; but that revelation will be better understood. No other doctrines of salvation shall then be preached; but their beauty shall be more clearly seen, and their influence more sensibly felt. No other ordinances of Divine worship shall then be administered; but they will be more purely dispensed, and more remarkably blessed for the conversion and edification of men. No other form of

church government shall then be used, than that which now exists, according to the Divine institution; but the administration of it shall be more conscientious and spiritual. No other ordinances of censure different from those already revealed and practised; but they shall seldom be needed, and when they are employed, the offenders will be truly penitent, and the spectators will fear. There shall be no other administrators of gospel ordinances, than the present Christian ministry, whose office is appointed in the Divine word; but in knowledge, holiness, and fervour, they will far excel those who now labour in word and doctrine. There shall not be any other office-bearers in the church, than those helps and governments which God hath already set in her; but their ability and faithfulness for the important work will then be greatly increased. To the Christian church, in all the periods of her existence, there is one body, and one Spirit, and one hope of the Christian's calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Though there are diversities of gifts, it is the same Spirit; differences of administrations, it is the same Lord; and diversities of operations, it is the same God who worketh all in all.

4. Though the spiritual exercises and enjoyments of believers in the millennial church shall be very high, they will still be imperfect saints and militant Christians. The believer's perfection, both in blessedness and service, is reserved for that time, when Christ shall come, and receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also. Every believer, while in this world, even in the most prosperous state of the church, will find it necessary to adopt Paul's words,—“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus,” Philip. iii. 12. They will even then be exercised in the spiritual warfare, finding a law in their members warring against the law of their mind. They will still find imperfection attending them, in all their religious duties, and in all their spiritual enjoyments; because though their attainments shall be high, there are still greater things laid up for them in heaven. They will be exercised in the life of faith on the Son of God, and in the study of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. To all the ordinary trials of human life, and to the common difficulties of the Christian's religious duty and exercise,

they will be exposed; though, on account of their high degrees of holiness and comfort, they will be less burdensome to them, than they are to us. They will still feel mortality working in their bodily frame, and will in the end put off their tabernacle, as the Lord Jesus hath appointed unto them.

5. Christians should endeavour to employ themselves in those religious duties which are suited to their present situation. In the day of prosperity they ought to be joyful, and in the day of adversity they should consider. The millennial saints will be placed in the most comfortable circumstances, having the wonderful works of God before their eyes, and enjoying abundantly the blessings of his favour; the spiritual employment which is ascribed to them, therefore, consists in praise, thanksgiving, adoration, wonder and delight. The wisdom that cometh from above is profitable to direct Christians in the knowledge of their situation, and of those duties which that situation requires. The Divine injunction, which ought to guide our way in this important concern, is expressed in the following words:—"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms," Jam. v. 13. The millennial church will be directed, wisely to observe this infallible rule. It is an effect of that spiritual madness, which is naturally in the hearts of all men, to be ignorant of our condition, and to neglect those duties which are suited to it. Of this the following account of the ancient church is a melancholy illustration:—"And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth. And, behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine," Isa. xxii. 12, 13. O let us study to avoid this sore evil, and to endeavour to be employed before the Lord, according as the state of the church, the situation of our relatives, and our own personal condition do demand.

6. The church enjoys the greatest purity and happiness, when she is favoured with the brightest displays of the Divine glory. The church of the latter day will behold the Divine glory, by his works of judgment, and of mercy, in an extraordinary manner. The manifestations of that glory, and their spiritual discernment of it, will be principal causes, both of their holiness and comfort. They will have an experimental enjoyment of that apostolic privilege:—"But we all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord,

are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The appearance of God's glory, is the greatest good that can exist among his creatures, and their perception of it is their highest privilege. In those days, therefore, when God gives to the church bright discoveries of his glory, by his Spirit, his word, and his works among them, the assembly of his saints will be highly privileged with consolation in the Lord, and with conformity to him. As it is with the church as a body, so will it be with individual believers. When he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into their heart, by the Spirit's application of the word to their souls, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ, they act faith in him for their salvation, they see the beauty of the Lord, they love him with all their heart, and they have a blessed enlargement in holiness and comfort. All this glory is seen in the person, and through the mediation of Christ, discerned by the Christian's knowledge, applied by the Christian's faith, and inwardly felt by the Christian's spiritual experience. Let us, therefore, improve the Divine word, the ordinances of Divine grace, and the duties of religion, that by them, as means prepared by himself, we may behold the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

7. Christians have need to be prepared for the coming of those glorious days. The first vision that John had of the millennial church, chap. vii. 9, was introduced by a vision which he had of another company, consisting of 144,000, who were sealed with the seal of the living God. This privilege consists in the powerful operations of the Spirit, by the word, conveying to believers sanctifying, comforting, and establishing grace. By this privilege they are enabled to continue in the exercise of faith and the practice of holiness; to adhere to his truths, and to wait for his coming; to suffer for his name's sake, and to reverence his judgments; to rejoice in hope of the coming of his kingdom, and to observe the signs of its approach. As those who have the mark of the beast in their right hand, or on their fore-head, belong to him and are devoted to wrath and destruction; so those who are sealed by the angel ascending from the east, belong to God, and are marked out for preservation and safety, whether in a time of calamity, or in the season of prosperity and rest. "The sun shall not smite them by day, nor the moon by night." If we are among the company of true believers, we belong

to the 144,000 who are sealed for the season of judgments, in the effusion of the vials; and are also prepared for the coming of the church's glory and purity. If the vision that John had, at the beginning of that chapter, of four angels holding the winds, that they should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, be now fulfilled, in that providential dispensation, by which the four great powers in Europe, by their military occupation of France, are preserving national tranquillity; If this application of the providence to the prediction, which has lately been made by one of the most able writers on Prophecy in modern times, be correct, and indeed on the side of it there is high probability, what reason have we, at this time, to be seeking the application of the seal of the living God to our souls, that if we live to see the end of those wonders, we may joyfully mingle among the innumerable company, and join them in their triumphant song; and, if this is denied to us, we may anticipate the song, by praising God for the revelation of the predictions, and promises, concerning those glorious days, in the faith and desire that he will accomplish his own word, "I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

AN
INQUIRY

INTO

THE 'SIGNS WHICH INDICATE THE CHURCH'S HAPPY CONDITION
TO BE AT HAND.

DISCOURSE III.

MARK i. 15.—*The time is fulfilled, and, the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

WHEN the Lord is about to accomplish any extraordinary dispensation among men, he often gives them those providential warnings which indicate its approach. By Christians, who have the direction of his word, those intimations of his sovereign designs ought to be carefully considered, and clearly understood. It is recorded to the honour of the men of Issachar, that they, on a very trying occasion, “had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do,” 1 Chron. xii. 32. When the Redeemer dwelt among men, it is stated to the disgrace of the Jews, that though they could discern the face of the sky, they were not able to discern the signs of the times. A proper attention to those signs, therefore, is an important duty, and a just view of them is a great spiritual attainment. As God has appointed many natural signs as premonitions of the approach of occurrences in nature; so he has established moral signs which no less clearly indicate to us, that some great spiritual change is at hand. When God exercises his condescension, by favouring us with those signs of his coming, it is most criminal to neglect or despise them, and most reasonable to observe and to receive instruction from them. It becomes us, therefore, with deep humility, to investigate those Divine operations, and to cry to him, by fervent prayer, that he may enlighten our minds in the knowledge of his ways. When Christ informed his disciples of the

destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, they said to him,—
 “What shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled.”
 To their inquiry Jesus made a particular reply; and, as he often
 does to his people, above what they can ask or think, he added a
 variety of important directions how they were to act, at that in-
 teresting crisis. From those things it is evident, that the members of
 the church are abundantly warranted to observe the events that are
 coming to pass in their day, that they may so understand and
 apply those signs, either of mercy or of judgment, as will enable
 them to know if their Lord is delaying his coming for their
 deliverance, or is on his way to bestow the kingdom on his chosen
 people.

Some of those times which shall be fulfilled at Antichrist's fall,
 and some of the parts of the church's blessedness in her millennial
 state having been mentioned, that which was proposed next for
 consideration is,

III. To specify some of those signs which indicate that this
 blessed condition of the church is at hand. •

1. The exertions that are made to translate the holy Scriptures
 into all languages, to print and to publish them throughout the
 world, are a sign that this kingdom of God is at hand. To the
 saints who have lived in the foregoing ages, and in the early part of
 this generation, it has often been a matter of wonder, what method
 Divine providence would employ, for sending his word to the darkened
 nations of the earth. Sensible of the indispensable necessity of their
 enjoying the Scriptures, in order to their spiritual illumination, and
 to their turning to God; and convinced of the difficulty of their ob-
 taining the sacred oracles, they have often been disposed to say, How
 can this be accomplished? By bringing into operation the Bible So-
 cieties which have been established, both at home and abroad, God
 in his over ruling providence, has answered this perplexing question,
 and has overcome those seemingly insurmountable difficulties. If we
 consider the object, the exertions, the extent, the success and the
 co-operation of Bible Societies, we will see in them a sign that the
 kingdom of God is at hand. The object of those societies is to fur-
 nish Christians and Jews, Mahometans and Pagans, with the holy
 Scriptures in their own language, without note or comment. May
 we not stand still and wonder at this object! Can any object be

conceived that has a tendency more directly to promote the glory of God, and the spiritual and eternal salvation of his rational creatures? To send to spiritually dead sinners the word of life, to give to the darkened nations that which God has revealed for a lamp to the feet, and a light to the path of mankind, for guiding them infallibly to the knowledge, the service, and the enjoyment of God, must be an object of the highest importance. We may wonder also at the magnitude of this object. To furnish all nations with this precious word is a work which is not more remarkable for its utility, than it is for its grandeur.—The exertions that are made for effecting this object make a part of this sign. How many are now actively employed in translating the Scriptures, in printing them, and dispersing the sacred volume among the nations? We have every reason to believe that their number is great, that their diligence is unwearied, that their faithfulness is conscientious, and their labour is unremitting. The assiduous study, the fatiguing travail, and the daily labour of many persons, are employed to accomplish this object.—The extent of those exertions is truly astonishing.—In Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, these societies have greatly increased, and are still increasing. They have been erected in all parts of the earth, excepting those which are so remote that they have not yet heard of them, or so ignorant as not to understand their object, or so interested in keeping men in ignorance, idolatry and error, and in a state of corporeal and mental slavery to the power of men, as to give to this grand object, the illumination of mankind, a most malignant opposition. The success of those societies is also most encouraging. How many thousands, and tens of thousands of copies of God's word, either in whole or in part, have been distributed among the nations! Into a very great number of languages, and dialects of the same language, the holy Scriptures have been translated, printed and published in the earth, since the erection of the Parent Bible Society at London, in 1804.—The co-operation of those societies is also worthy of our notice. Though they are established in parts of the earth which are very distant from one another, and among people of very different dispositions, yet there is such an unity of object among them all, such friendly communications maintained among them, and such mutual assistance given to one another, as to cause their exertions to bear as directly on the same grand design, as if all

their operations were guided by the wisdom and energy of one mind. Now, since it is the word of God that must enlighten men in the knowledge of the way of salvation, since it is the mean by which the systems of darkness shall be removed from the earth, since it is the instrument of erecting Christ's kingdom in the world, and since God, in his wise and powerful providence, has begun and so far carried on this blessed scheme, have we not reason to conclude that the Mediator's kingdom which this word is appointed to promote, is at hand? Can we suppose that the Lord will withhold his blessing from those means which are so eminently calculated to promote his glory, and the salvation of men? We may, therefore, believe, that as the morning dawn indicates the approach of the ruler of the day; so the spreading of the Divine word among the nations is the harbinger of the rise of the Sun of Righteousness on them, with healing in his wings, and that the kingdom of God is at hand.

2. The extraordinary endeavours that are now made to publish the glad tidings of salvation to the nations, by preaching the gospel to them, are also a sign that the millennial state of the church is at hand. It is long since Christians, in different nations, attempted to spread the knowledge of the gospel among some of the heathens; but the endeavours that have been made for this purpose, during the last twenty years, are truly extraordinary. A great number of powerful Societies have been established in these lands, and in other nations, which have it as their object to send forth evangelical missions to the most distant parts of the earth that they may preach the gospel to the benighted inhabitants. These Societies occupy different fields, and some of them send their labourers to different parts of the earth. Societies have also been formed, and have been for some time in active operation, for sending persons, duly qualified, to preach the gospel, to the darkened parts of the nations to which we belong. Many men who appear to be actuated by a concern for the glory of God, the honour of Christ, the propagation of the gospel, and the salvation of immortal souls, are now actively employed in almost every nation of the earth, in preaching the gospel to the heathen world. The word of God is not only given to the nations, but persons are sent to preach its doctrines, to explain and to apply that word to the consciences of men. As Jesus, at one time, sent forth the twelve Apostles, and, at another time,

sent forth seventy disciples to preach in Judea, the doctrines of the kingdom of God; as the church of Jerusalem sent Barnabas to visit the Gentiles who had received the word of God, and as the church at Antioch, by the command of the Spirit, sent forth Paul and Barnabas to go to the Gentiles, who had not yet heard of Christ's name; so the duty of sending forth persons who are properly qualified, to preach the Gospel to the heathen, must be of indispensable obligation on Christians. Those men who from a conscientious regard to the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls forsake their relations, endure privations, encounter difficulties and danger, and suffer fatigue and trouble, that they may publish the doctrines of salvation to a perishing world, ought to be esteemed among the most useful servants of Jesus Christ. As great success attended the first publication of the gospel to the nations; so we are encouraged to hope, that if these endeavours are conscientiously made and continued, that the same success shall attend them, till, by the blessing of the Spirit, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea. Since God in his holy providence has excited Christians to form societies for this important purpose, since so many who appear, in some good degree, to be qualified for this work, have devoted themselves to it, and have voluntarily engaged in it, and since some comfortable effects have been produced in many parts of the earth, we may consider this as a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. Can we suppose that God's own ordinance, for the conversion of the heathen, will be put in operation among them, and that he will refuse to work with it, and with them who dispense it? May we not rather conclude that, in his own time, as well as by his own power, he will make it effectual for completely evangelizing the darkened parts of the earth. As this is one of the means of accomplishing this change, and as it is now applied in a far more remarkable manner, than at any former period, we may contemplate it as one of the signs that the kingdom of God is approaching.

3. The efforts that are now made to promote the rapid and universal education of mankind, and to circulate among them evangelic catechisms and tracts, are a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. The education of men is an object of the highest importance. Those nations, whose population are blessed with education, excel other nations, in knowledge, in religion, in morality, in wealth,

in liberty, and in the useful arts, to an inconceivable degree. Those nations, therefore, who make the most extensive and wise provision for the education of their population, do best promote the honour of God, the happiness of posterity, and their own good. Those parents, and guardians of youth, who neglect the education of the children who are under their care, manifest little concern either for their temporal or spiritual welfare. Those who have obtained a common education, such as is given in our parochial schools, have it in their power, by a right improvement of that blessing, to acquire such treasures of knowledge in every thing that is truly valuable, as almost places them on a level with those who have enjoyed a liberal education. By an ability merely to read the scriptures, persons are enabled to promote both their own spiritual good, and the conversion and salvation of others. As the blessing of education is very great, it is no wonder to see religious and philanthropic men engaged in devising and executing schemes for effecting it. Since the prevalence among men of ignorance and brutality is favourable to the kingdom of Satan and of darkness; the advancement of knowledge and information in the world must be advantageous to the kingdom of Christ and of light. Extraordinary efforts, therefore, to spread education among men, must be a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. In our times, these efforts are strenuously made. On the evening of the Lord's day, schools, which, in some circumstances of places and of persons, and when properly conducted, are both lawful and expedient, have been erected and carried on in many parts, to the advantage of those who have attended them. Most useful and efficient societies have been formed, and are in active operation, whose object it is gratuitously to educate the young and the old, in the Highlands of Scotland, in the kingdom of Ireland, in the principality of Wales, and in other places. By the invention and improvement of new methods of teaching, the instruction of youth has been greatly facilitated, and one person is enabled, in the same time, to instruct a much greater number. By the exertions of the British and Foreign School Society, in patronizing this method of teaching at home, and promoting it in other nations, it is likely to be the mean of bestowing the blessing of education more expeditiously, upon uninstructed places of the earth. Besides all this, the evangelical missions to the heathen, having catechists and teachers attached to them, set up schools among

them, for the instruction of the young and the old, and those who preach the gospel, either superintend those schools, or labour in them as teachers; so that many are instructed, wherever those missions are established. With those laudable endeavours, the exertions of the Tract Societies are closely connected. To print in different languages, catechisms and tracts, which exhibit a summary view of gospel doctrines and christian duties, or illustrate and apply important parts of revealed truth; and to circulate them at home and in foreign nations, gratis, or at a very low price, are the principal objects of those Societies. By these means, the reading of vain and immoral ballads and tracts is counteracted; the minds of youth, and of others, are directed to the things which belong to their everlasting peace; a mean is used to convince the erroneous and immoral of the sin and danger of their principles and conduct; an opportunity is furnished to those who have acquired the habit of reading, to exercise it for the instruction of themselves and others; and to those who have obtained the holy scriptures, an help is administered to understand their contents. By all those different and extended exertions, we may hope that many have been plucked as brands out of the burning, have been delivered from ignorance, profanity, idleness, and immorality, and have been brought to the knowledge both of the gospel as the object of their faith, and of the law as the rule of their obedience. Since God has put it into the hearts of men to exert themselves, in this extraordinary way, to promote the education, the religious and moral instruction of men, far and near, we must conclude that, by those means, he will work among the nations that change, which will prepare them for the glory of the latter day.

4. The establishment of Christian societies, for the instruction and conversion of the Jews, is a sign that the kingdom of God, in its millennial state, is at hand. The deliverance of God's ancient people from their infidelity, their embracing Christianity, and their restoration to their own land, will be a very distinguished part of that Divine operation, by which God will introduce and establish the reign of righteousness in the earth. The illumination of the nations will be accomplished, when the Lord shall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound. On this account, the existence and operation of those societies, for convincing and converting the Jews, is also a sign that the millennial day is draw-

ing near. The object of those societies is to use every eligible mean in their power to convince the Jews, that the Messiah is come, that it is vain for them to look for another, and that Jesus of Nazareth is the very Christ. By giving Christian instruction to as many of themselves and their children as will receive it; by endeavouring to present before them the arguments which prove that the Messiah is come, and that all the predictions of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus, the Christian Saviour; by furnishing them with the New Testament in the Hebrew language; and by endeavouring to induce them carefully to peruse those sacred oracles, Christians are now applying their mercy to the Jews, that they also may obtain mercy. This is the ordinance of God for the Jews' conversion; and this, Christians are warranted and encouraged to use, for that end. When the Jews shall obtain mercy, it shall be accomplished by the instrumentality of the mercy which is now enjoyed by the Gentiles. The word and Spirit of God are the great substance of the Gentiles' mercy. The former is in the church's hands, and the latter is the gift of God. Let the church, therefore, use the instrument which God has given her, and cry to him for the Holy Spirit to accompany the means with power, for turning the seed of Abraham to the knowledge of the truth; and then, though the success at the beginning of their endeavours may be small, the latter end shall greatly increase.

5. The attention which seems to be given to the word of God, and to public religious instruction, by Pagans, Papists, Mahometans and Jews, is a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. For information on these matters we are indebted to the reports of those societies which are employed on those objects, and to the accounts which they receive from those whom they have sent to execute their work. In them are found encouraging accounts of that attention which is given to the Scriptures, and to the gospel, when it is preached among them. An extraordinary desire after the Divine word has been manifested, wherever it has been distributed; and a diligent improvement has been made of it, by those who have received it. They do not reject it, they are not indifferent unto it; but they shew an earnest concern to obtain it. They crowd around the persons who are employed to distribute the Scriptures, they express much joy when they receive the Bible, and discover much grief when their applications cannot be answered; so that the only distress of those who distribute the Scriptures has often been the

fewness of the copies which they had to give away. The use they make of the Bible when they have obtained it, is also sufficiently attested. They read it both for their own benefit, and for the instruction of others. They read it at home, they read it in public, by which one copy becomes a common good, and a mean of instruction to many. They converse about its sacred contents among themselves, and, in many instances, apply for explanation to those from whom they have received it. They are also very attentive to the preaching of the gospel. The accounts which have been received of their concern to hear the word in many places, and of the effects which have been produced on their minds, and their conduct in life, are highly encouraging. Many of them also shew a concern to obtain education, by attending the schools that have been erected among them, for bestowing on them this inestimable blessing. There is reason to believe, that the success is fully proportioned to the means which are employed ; and that, if the latter were increased, the former would be much more abundant. Some Mahometans and Jews are also shewing a concern for the word of God. The scriptures in the Turkish language is beginning to enter among the former ; and the New Testament in Hebrew is beginning to attract the attention of the latter. To bring those things to any desirable perfection, must be a work of time ; but when the ordinary means are used, and some good effects produced on a few, we may hope that the Lord, when his time is come, will pour out his Spirit on all flesh, so that the earth shall be made to bring forth in one day, and nations shall be born at once. A religious observation of those Divine providences, and a trust in the promise and power of God, will constrain us to consider such extensive operations, with their effects, as a token that all the ends of the world shall soon remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.

6. The prevalence of public opinion in favours of true rational Christian liberty, and in opposition to every species of thralldom, is a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. When the dark system of popery prevailed universally in Europe, and when the court of Rome, consisting of the Pope and his Cardinals, exerted its power over men, the human mind was subdued under a most degrading and unnatural bondage, in matters of religion, and of politics, and even of philosophy. No liberty was given to discuss articles of

faith, or modes of worship, in opposition to their blasphemous doctrines, their unscriptural decrees, their unholy traditions, or their abominable idolatry. No permission was granted to animadvert on the science of government, or to canvass the measures of the political administrations. No allowance was made for the improvement of the philosophy of those ages. The human understanding and will were completely kept in bondage, to the dominion of civil and ecclesiastical despotism. The Roman Antichrist, aware that the word of God was directly against his system, took it entirely from the people, removed the key of knowledge, and left his votaries to wander in gross spiritual darkness. Fearful also of the exercise of human reason, this spiritual Despot made war with it, and forbade its exertions on all subjects that were any way connected with the religion or government of the nations. The Christian world was in this dismal condition, when God, in his holy providence, employed those men, who were the instruments in his hand to introduce that happy reformation, which commenced three hundred years ago. Then men found themselves at liberty to think, to speak, and to write, on all those important subjects which promote the glory of God, and the good of men. Then the human mind, liberated from its prison, began to exercise itself on matters of religion, politics, and philosophy, and filled the nations with light. The holy Scriptures were again put into the hands of the christian people, who, from wandering in ignorance, were now conducted into the paths of faith and holiness. Since those days, great alterations have taken place in the sentiments of men, both with respect to religion and civil liberty. There have been particular times, in which the human mind has been greatly enlarged in the knowledge of the one, or the other, or of both. The second religious Reformation in Britain, the memorable Revolution, the first American war, and the Revolution in France have been the chief of those periods. To produce this beneficial change on the sentiments of men, in favours of religion, of true liberty, and human rights, and in opposition to tyranny and slavery, each of these important events has greatly contributed. For discovering to men the difference between true liberty, civil and religious, on the one hand; and licentiousness, impiety, and profligacy on the other, the last of these events has been also eminently useful. This alteration in the opinions of men, is a great blessing to the nations. They are objects of vast importance

about which the change of opinion is made. The prevalency of them among mankind is necessary to raise them from that state of degradation in which they have existed, during the reign of the Roman beast, and his little horn. The providential prevalence among men of right sentiments on these things is also a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. However inimical the exercise of human reason may be to the Popish system, which is full of absurdity, it never can be detrimental to the kingdom of Christ. The age of true reason will be the age of pure religion; and the prosperity of religion will raise human reason to its most exalted exercise.

7. The measures which the court of Rome, and its clergy have adopted, with a view to counteract that system of means, which the God of the whole earth is employing, for the illumination of mankind, are a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. Their opposition is principally directed against Bible Societies, and the schools for the education of youth. To some of their dignified clergy, who have countenanced Bible Societies, and encouraged the circulation of the Scriptures among their people; the head of that council has sent bulls, prohibiting them from assisting those Societies, and from giving the Scriptures to the people; branding the publication of the word of God, by those Societies, with the most odious names; commanding them to condemn what they have done; endeavouring to flatter and cajole them into obedience; and intimating, not obscurely, what punishment he is able to inflict on them, if they continue in those practices. Their clergy have prohibited the people from receiving the Scriptures, which some Societies, from pity to their perishing souls, have gratuitously offered to them. They would not even allow their people to receive the Scriptures, printed according to their own approved translation, which was generously offered to them gratis, if the clergy would suffer it to be done. They have forbidden their people to send their children to those schools, which were opened in the places of their residence for the free education of youth. Some of those who continued to send their children to the schools, contrary to their command, they have excommunicated, in the most frightful forms. To what extent this opposition may be carried, and what effects it may produce, time only can declare; but in it we may see a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. It is such a sign, as it discovers the Popish church to be a kingdom of darkness, ignorance, impiety and misery. It is also such a sign, be-

cause it proves, that bestowing education on men, and placing in their hands the word of God, are the means which are well calculated to destroy that perverted Christianity, which is the essence of their religion. A conviction of this must have induced them to venture upon such a public, unreasonable, and shameful opposition to an object, which must recommend itself to the approbation of every other rational creature. This opposition is a sign of the coming of Christ's kingdom, because it demonstrates the suitableness and efficacy of those means for introducing the reign of light, of truth, and of righteousness, on the earth. We are, therefore, encouraged to hope, that God will over-rule this opposition, and use it as a mean for giving such discoveries to the nations of the evil of that idolatrous system, as will, in due time, constrain the people to forsake it, and induce their Rulers to make it desolate and naked, to eat its flesh, and to burn it with fire.

8. The judgments, which God has executed, and is still executing, on the nations, are a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. Divine predictions assure us, that the nations must suffer the effects of the Lord's anger, on account of their sin, before they can enjoy that peaceful and prosperous state, which is contained in the promise. Before the conversion of the Jews, "there must be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time," Dan. xii. 1. It is Jehovah's determination, to gather the nations, that he may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, and all the earth must be devoured with the fire of his jealousy; before he will turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent, Zeph. iii. 8, 9. The judgments that are contained in the third two must be executed on the nations, before the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, Rev. xi. 14, 15. The seven vials of Divine wrath must be poured out upon the earth, before the church shall be delivered completely, from her wilderness condition, or bring to an end her sackcloth prophecy, Rev. xvi. The terrible war, which is signified by the slaughter of Armageddon, must be accomplished among men, before the church can sing on the lovely heights of her millennial Sion. These judgments are necessary for vindicating God's government, for fulfilling his holy word, for destroying his implacable enemies, and for trying and purifying his

church. A time of judgments has often been, by the Divine blessing, a season of good to mankind. As a time of private correction, from the Divine hand, is frequently to believers, a season of great spiritual good; so is it with the children of men, in a day of public calamity. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness," Isa. xxvi. 9. Since the Divine judgments must be poured out, before the kingdom of God shall come; we may conclude, that the execution of them will be a sign of its approach. All the nations, that are principally concerned in the vials of wrath, have suffered, in the most extraordinary manner, by the judgment of war, and its various attendants, for more than twenty years. If we review in our minds, the way in which this war commenced, the objects for which it was undertaken, the incessant and violent nature of the struggle, its wide spreading circuit from nation to nation, the length of time in which it continued, the desolations it brought on the earth, the character of the nations and persons who were the greatest sufferers, the dreadful destruction of human lives which it accomplished, the uncommon waste of national wealth which it occasioned, the manner in which it has terminated, and the effects it has produced on the nations that were involved in it, we will clearly see, that this season of war has been a time of recompences for the controversy of Sion. As the church is not yet delivered, as the Jews are not yet brought in, and as the Antichristian church, and her secular supporters are not yet removed, we may be certain that the storm of judgments has not passed away. The greater and more dreadful part of the scene, remains yet to be acted. Since the Lord prefaces the account of the seventh vial with those remarkable words:—"Behold I come as a thief," there is reason to apprehend that it will approach suddenly, and when men are secure. This season of judgments that has passed over us is another sign that the millennial kingdom is near.

9. The tottering state of the throne of Antichrist, and of the thrones of some of the Antichristian princes, is a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. The Pope of Rome was lately dethroned, and was obliged to live as a wandering man, in solitude and degradation. The greater part of the kings, who ruled in the Roman earth, were also driven from their thrones, and forced to seek shelter and protection in foreign lands. In these dispensations of providence, He, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice, has given his

church an earnest, an emblem, and a presage of what he will finally accomplish on them, when the kingdom of God shall come. The Pope has now been restored to his civil power, to his ecclesiastic authority, and to his seat at Rome. For their exertions in order to his restoration and establishment, Protestant princes must give an account to Him who hath said:—"Be ye not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues." The less efficient exertions of Catholic princes, for accomplishing this end, will no doubt procure their ruin, when they shall fall with him. The restored dynasties, civil and ecclesiastic, do not appear to have much stability; and this we are bound to consider as a sign, that the kingdom of God is at hand. With respect to the Pope, his power is weakened, his revenues are impaired, his authority is despised, his exertions are feeble, his spiritual kingdom is divided, and there is no very great security for his retaining his seat, or the exercise of his power. On him these words must soon have their accomplishment:—"Whom God shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." With violence shall he be thrown down, and shall be cast alive into destruction. With reference to the restored civil dynasties, as little stability seems to belong to them. Two of them, for the security of their thrones, seem to depend on the troops of foreign nations which occupy their territory. A third appears to be in danger of a revolt among his subjects at home, and is overwhelmed with a rebellion in a distant part of his dominions. A fourth is still in a distant part of his states, to which he was obliged to go for safety. There is as much difference between the present power of the Pope and of those popish princes, and the power which they formerly were able to exert; as there is between the vigour of a person in the prime of his life, and that of a man, to whom, by age and debility, the glassshopper is a burden. In all those dispensations of providence, by which God has weakened the power of his church's enemies, we may see a sign that her deliverance and prosperity are drawing near.

10. The uncommon exertions which have lately been made to turn the attention of men to the scripture predictions which relate to the church's deliverance, and to the fall of Antichrist; and to those Divine providences, which seem to be a fulfilment of those predictions, are a sign that the kingdom of God is at hand. This is mentioned as a sign of the time, when all those things shall be

fulfilled. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," Dan. xii. 4. It is a certain mark of the time of the end, when many persons are excited, in the providence of God, to employ their time and abilities in the investigation of Divine predictions, in the observation of Divine providences, and in the application of the one to the other, that they may know, and declare to the church, how far inspired prophecy is accomplished, by the things that have come to pass in our days. During the last twenty-five years, many books of this description have been published, and several of them have been republished, with corrections and additions. Many of them have been very generally read, their contents have been carefully considered, and, by their means, a great degree of knowledge, on those important matters, has been extensively diffused. Though these publications do not possess equal merit, yet few or none of them have altogether failed, in contributing something to our stock of knowledge, on those interesting subjects. —Some of them indeed have been excellent, and have, in a very high degree, attracted the public attention. The differences of opinion, which have been entertained by the authors, and the calm and manly discussions which those differences have occasioned, operated as a mean, to render our knowledge, on those points, more certain and correct. The progress of Divine providence has contributed greatly to explain the predictions, and has enabled those authors to discern and to correct some mistakes, and to add some new and important discoveries. We are bound to consider those things as a sign that this happy season will soon arrive. Since God in his providence has employed so many, and has enabled some of them so well to accomplish the difficult work of explaining the predictions of his holy word; he is favouring Christians with suitable means to excite them to a proper concern for the coming of his kingdom, to give them an understanding of the nature and fulfilment of prophecy, to animate them to those duties which this state of things requires, and to stir them up to preparation and watchfulness, that those days of trial and deliverance may not come upon them unawares. As nothing similar to this, of the same extent, in the same variety, and with the same perspicuity of application to the operations of Divine providence, has ever happened in the Christian church; we will not be attentive to the Lord's tokens that

he is setting in the midst of us, if we refuse to consider these occurrences as a sign of the coming of his kingdom.

11. The very general expectation which has been entertained, by Christian professors, of the speedy coming of Christ's kingdom, in its millennial glory, is also a sign that it is at hand. When any signal mercy is bestowed on the church, an expectation of it is often produced in the hearts of those, who fear and serve the Lord. This is demonstrated by the exercise of the saints, both at the coming of Christ into the world, and at the deliverance of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon. When Christ was, for the first time, brought into the temple, it is said of Simeon, "That the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was upon him." Of Anna the prophetess, on the same occasion, it is said, that "she spake of Christ to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Besides these two eminent persons, there were others who expected Messiah's appearance at that time, and who looked for the Redeemer's coming, Luke ii. 25, 38. Concerning Joseph of Arimathea, that honourable Counsellor, it is recorded, that "he waited for the kingdom of God," Mark xv. 44. He had an expectation raised in his soul, that Christ's kingdom, in its New-testament form, should be immediately set up. When the seventy years of the Jews' bondage were coming to an end, an expectation of deliverance, at that time, was entertained in the minds of the religious captives. As this is attested of Daniel, we may conclude that it was the hope of many others; as we must not suppose that he would keep to himself the discovery he had made, or conceal from his brethren the hope he had founded on it:—"In the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and with sackcloth and ashes," Dan. ix. 2, 3. As there was an expectation of deliverance from their captivity excited in some of the Jewish captives, which hope was a sign that their liberation was drawing near; and as there were many pious Jews, at the day of Christ's incarnation, and in the time of his public ministry, who looked for redemption in Israel, and waited for the kingdom of God, as a sign that the Redeemer was come to accomplish the work of our redemption, and to

establish the gospel kingdom in the earth; so when there is a very general expectation existing in the minds of believers, that Christ's kingdom, in her millennial glory, is soon to be established in the earth, we may consider it as a sign that this blessed deliverance is at hand. If the nature of this expectation, its extent among Christians, and the ground on which they rest their hope, are duly considered, it will appear to be an unquestionable sign, that the desired object is near.—It is not a mere speculative opinion, or a bare conjecture; but it is a religious hope founded on the Divine promises, creating in them an earnest desire that God, for the glory of his name, and in mercy to immortal souls, would speedily send his gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth.—This hope is also become very general among Christians, and multitudes of them are now looking for redemption to the church, and waiting for the kingdom of God.—The ground of their hope is the same with that of Daniel. Like that holy Prophet, they understand by the books of inspired prophecy, that the number of the years which God would accomplish in the desolations of his church is now coming to an end. The existence, therefore, of such an expectation in those who are truly religious and well informed, is a sign that the millennial day is at hand.

12. The prayers and thanksgivings that are offered to God, for success to the means of accomplishing this great work, and the very liberal contributions which have been made for supporting them, by Christians of every denomination, and of every land, are a sign that this kingdom of God is at hand. As it is the duty, we ought to believe it has been the exercise of Christians, to offer to God fervent prayers for the progress of this great work, in time to come; and to give him thanks for the success of it, in time that is past. Something of great importance has already been done. An opening has been made into the kingdom of darkness. Light has begun to shine among men. Great exertions have been made, and much success has attended them. For these, let us bring our sacrifices of praise into the house of the Lord. There is reason to hope, that Christians are not negligent in this important duty. Every degree of success that has attended the endeavours, which have been employed to circulate the Scriptures, to preach the gospel, or to promote education among men, is entirely of God; for it is He alone who gives the increase. But as this great work is only at its begin-

ning, there is much need also for prayer. When the Lord intends to bestow a blessing on the church, he usually pours out his Spirit on her members, constraining them to cry mightily at the throne of grace for that blessing. Respecting this important concern, such we hope, is the dispensation of God to his people, and such is their exercise before him. Prayers in secret, in private, and in public; prayer, by concert, and without it; prayers stated and occasional, we have reason to believe, are offered to God by Christians every where, and of every profession, for the advancement of his kingdom in the world. This may be considered as a sign that the day of the Redeemer's triumph is near. Oh, that Christians would abound more and more in these duties.—The extraordinary contributions which have been made for supporting this wonderful work are a sign of the same thing. On no former occasion, was there ever so much of the property of man devoted to purposes of this kind, than there has been during the last twenty years. Multitudes of persons of both sexes, persons in every station, persons of every age, persons of every religious profession, and persons in almost every nation, have contributed of their substance for these purposes, and have consecrated part of their gain to the God of the whole earth. Contemplating the various plans which have been adopted for the religious instruction of men, considering the labours that have been undergone in executing them, and calculating the vast sums which the liberality of Christians has provided for supporting them, we may say, with wonder and praise, it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. However numerous and grand their objects have been, and however expensive, they have still been supported by those free contributions; and, it is hoped, they will continue to receive efficient support, till, through their instrumentality, the world shall be enlightened, and the millennial day shall dawn.

Some reflections from what has been said, on this part of the subject must be subjoined.

1. The wants of the unenlightened nations are many and great. They want the word of God, the preaching of the gospel, and the other ordinances of Divine grace. They want the knowledge of the God of salvation, of Christ who is the purchaser, and of the Spirit who is the applier of that salvation. They want the knowledge of the covenant of works, by the breach of which the human family have

been brought into a state of sin and misery, and the covenant of grace, of which Jesus is the Mediator and Surety, and which is all the salvation and desire of them who believe. They want regenerating and converting grace, justification into the favour, adoption into the family, and sanctification into the moral image of God. Without these, their condition must be deplorable, their lives immoral, and their end, misery for ever. They want faith in Jesus Christ, and repentance of sin unto spiritual and eternal life. These blessings, according to the ordinary and appointed dispensation of Divine grace, are bestowed upon men, only by means of the word and ordinances. As their wants are many, so they are exceeding great. What human wants are to be compared with those which are spiritual and eternal? "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" To those who are Christians indeed, but not to those who are such only in profession, will the wants of the darkened nations appear, in all their magnitude and variety. Though the unconverted persons, among the enlightened nations, labour under numerous and important wants, yet enjoying the revelation of grace, the offers of Christ, the promise of the Spirit, and the command to believe, they are not without hope in the world; but the heathen are destitute of these. Let their situation impress our minds, and fill our souls with pity.

2. The means that are now used for supplying the wants of the darkened nations, possess a suitableness, and a fulness, for answering that end. The word of God, the preaching of the gospel, the schools for education, the circulation of evangelic catechisms and tracts, and the various opportunities for their improvement, which necessarily accompany their enjoyment of them, constitute that system of means which is now employed, for accomplishing this great end. The human mind cannot conceive any means that are better adapted to their religious improvement. How suited are they to enlighten their minds to renew their hearts, to rectify their conduct, and to train up the youth in the ways of the Lord! There is also a fulness or perfection in those means. If this system is considered, it will not be easy to conceive of any thing that can render it more complete. Reading and hearing the word, meditation, conversation and prayer, are connected with their enjoying the Scriptures, and evangelic catechisms, and religious tracts. Public preaching and

hearing the gospel, prayer, praise, and other ordinances of worship, accompany their enjoyment of the Christian ministry. Reading, hearing, catechising, occasional explanations, exhortation and prayer, belong to the exercises in the schools. Besides, the private intercourse that must subsist, between the preachers and their people, the teachers and their scholars, and the people who are privileged with those means, among themselves, and with others, must be of vast advantage to their religious and moral improvement. All these things taken together form a most complete system of means, for supplying the wants of the darkened parts of the earth. Who would not desire, that since it is so perfect in its nature, it were more perfect in its extent? These constitute the grand engine which God hath instituted, and which Christians have employed, for the illumination of the benighted world.

3. The success that has attended the application of those means, is sufficient to encourage Christians to persevere in the use of them. Their attempts have not been fruitless, the means have not been blasted, nor has their labour been in vain. They have been instrumental already of much good. They have had great success both in providing, and in applying the means. They have had this success, in the publication of the Scriptures, in the evangelic missions, in the circulation of tracts, and in the schools. In those operations, this success has attended them both at home, and in foreign nations. What a multitude of Bibles, in many languages, have now been printed and circulated in the world! They have the prospect, as certain as human contrivance and exertion can make it, of publishing a much greater quantity, in the space of a few years. The evangelic missions are prospering, their number is increasing; and their success is great in the Lord. The schools are also prospering exceedingly, and they will soon be brought into operation in places where they have not formerly existed, and where their salutary effects have never been enjoyed. These are promising appearances, (the particular facts I cannot here detail,) and they should stimulate Christians to the most vigorous exertions, that all the ends of the earth, may see the salvation of their God.

4. The object that Christians are endeavouring to accomplish among the nations, by their extraordinary and united exertions, is great and glorious. The excellency of an object adds dignity to the means, and spreads a lustre over the exertions that are made, by

the use of the means for accomplishing it. To no other object can this truth more truly apply, than to that which is now before us. To deliver mankind from their present state of darkness, idolatry, alienation from God, gross immorality, and, at last, from everlasting misery; and to bring them to the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. May I not express it in the Redeemer's own words to Paul? "To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me," Acts xxvi. 18. Their object contains something which is still higher than this. The object in view is to promote the glory of the God of salvation in the earth; to exalt the Saviour's honour among men; to be instrumental in accomplishing God's gracious purposes, and in fulfilling the predictions of his word; and to give occasion to the holy angels to raise the celestial song, and an opportunity to contemplate those objects among men, which they desire, with holy delight, to look into. The object to be attained by those means is the demolition of the kingdom of Satan in the world; and the erection and establishment of Christ's kingdom on its ruin; that God may be glorified, and that sinners may be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation. Such is the object that Christians have in view, and such shall be the effects of its accomplishment. It is, therefore, great and glorious. Who would not desire to have some concern in effecting it?

5. When the Lord is working, in his providence, for the illumination of the Gentiles, he is not unmindful of his ancient and peculiar people, the Jews. He is also making provision for them. Among their dry bones are begun a noise and a shaking, which will terminate in their spiritual resurrection. Some of them are active members in some Bible Societies. Some of them are searching the New Testament in their original language, so far as it has advanced. Not a few of them have turned to Christianity in other nations, and hopes are entertained of many more. The present exertions of Christians in printing the Scriptures have excited in some of them the hope of their Messiah's speedy appearance. In this hope they will not be disappointed; though he may come in a way that they do not expect. In all these things, it is evident, that God is remembering them in their low estate, for his mercy endureth for

ever; and that he will deliver them from the hand of their enemies, for his mercy endureth for ever.

6. The Divine government is truly wonderful, and his agency is brightly displayed, in those new and strange operations. "All things are of God," not in creation only, but also in providence and grace. This agency of God, the prophet describes, Hag. i. 14. "And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came, and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God." In the existence, operations and success of the Bible Societies, the evangelic missions, the school societies, the tract societies, and the attempts to awaken the Jews, He has exerted the same supernatural influence on the spirits of men. By turning the attention of men, to those great objects, enabling them to devise schemes for accomplishing them, putting it into the hearts of multitudes to contribute of their substance for their support, disposing the minds of many to engage in laborious services for bringing those plans into operation, encouraging and assisting them in their arduous work, and by giving to those schemes extraordinary increase, he has stirred up the spirits of men to come, and to work in the house of the Lord of hosts their God. Some have thought it wonderful that these schemes have not been devised, and those attempts made, at a more early period; and viewing them in one light, it may be true; but, considering them as the fruit of Divine agency, and as the ordering of Divine wisdom, we may be assured, that they have been brought into existence at the most seasonable, because at the appointed, time. They are all the execution of his decree, the fulfilment of his word, and the effects of his special providence, concerning the Redeemer's church. Let us ascribe to the Lord the glory of their being, activity and success; and trust in him for their continuance and prosperity, till all nations shall submit to the sceptre of Christ.

7. There is a duty incumbent on Christians with respect to those endeavours that are now made, to enlighten and convert to true Christianity the nations of the earth. As this is a work for the accomplishment of which the Lord must make bare his arm, or exert his power; prayer to him for this blessing, must be our indispensable duty. The first three petitions in our Lord's prayer, all bear upon this most important object. "Hallowed be

thy name,—Thy kingdom come,—Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” O, therefore, let us cry to the Lord, in every prayer of our’s, that he would enlighten the world, erect his kingdom on the earth, and bless the means that are, or may be employed, to promote those ends. As great labour must be performed in carrying on this work, much expense must be incurred; it is, therefore, the duty of Christians to contribute cheerfully for defraying it. Our lot is fallen in a time, when Christians are called, according to their religious attainments and worldly substance, to contribute, by fervent prayers and liberal donations, for promoting this great work of God. Some persons may incline to support one, some another, some more than one, and some even all of those Societies. Of his duty in this matter, let every Christian be fully persuaded in his own mind, and perform it faithfully, as in the sight of God. On a particular occasion, Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast in money into it, and many who were rich cast in much. He beheld a certain poor widow deposit her two mites in the Lord’s treasury, and gave her a peculiar commendation. The omniscient Jesus still sits over against the treasury, to observe who contribute, and if their contributions, for the relief of the poor, and for the promotion of his kingdom in the world, are proportioned to his providential bounty to them, and are made from proper motives. *Since God has assured us his kingdom shall come, since he is giving us signs that it is at hand, since so many means are applied in our day to promote its increase and establishment among men, and since we have calls and opportunities to glorify God with our substance, “let all that be round about him bring presents to him, that ought to be feared.”*

8. Time, sufferings and the increase of knowledge in the world, have not produced any favourable alteration in the system of Popery, or in the principles and conduct of its supporters. When God gives men space to repent, and they do not turn from their evil ways, but still persist in their iniquity; their sin is greatly aggravated, and their condemnation will be more awful. When he corrects men for their iniquity, and they still continue in their rebellion; peculiar criminality attaches to their disobedience. When men enjoy the means of improvement, and harden themselves in their opposition to God; they render their sin exceeding sinful, and expose themselves to the righteous judgments of God. All these

things may be applied to Antichrist and his votaries. They have enjoyed much time to consider their ways, they have been sorely chastised, and means of information have been administered to them abundantly; "but they repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone; and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornications, nor of their thefts." They are still mad upon their idol worship, and adhere to all their antichristian errors. Cruelty, tyranny, and persecution, still characterise their administrations. The most wicked decrees of their former councils are still the rule of their government, and their abominable traditions, equally with the Scriptures, if not above them, are the rule of their faith. That most cruel and wicked court, the Inquisition, is again in full operation, in many popish countries. That most destructive order of their clergy, the Jesuits, have been again restored to existence in that church. Their enmity at the holy Scriptures is still manifested clearly. The bulls of the Pope, against Bible Societies, are a proof of this. Besides that Popish power which is the image of the Roman Empire, has prohibited the entrance and sale of Bibles, from foreign Societies, in his dominions. In these ways they are increasing their guilt, and hastening their terrible fall.

9. For accomplishing his merciful and righteous purposes, the Great God performs very different works among men, at the same time. Of this, the providences of God to the nations, during the last twenty-five years, are a satisfactory demonstration. These years have been a season of Divine judgments unto men. The cup of God's anger has gone round among the nations, and has produced such effects, as should cause our souls remember the wormwood and the gall of those calamities, and be humbled in us. But in those very years, that glorious and Divine work, of which we have been speaking, has had its origin, and a part of its progress. When the councils of the nations were deliberating about war, and conquest; many bodies of Christians were consulting about the means of sending the word of God, and the gospel of Christ through the world. When the armies of the nations were attacking one another, and the confused noise of the warrior was heard, and garments rolled in blood were seen; the Societies of Christians were "wrestling against principalities, against powers, against the

rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." When the Lord was threshing the nations in his anger, He was, at the same time, giving birth and energy to a complete work, by which spiritual darkness shall be dispelled, and the whole earth shall be enlightened with his glory. These two dispensations of God shall contribute, in different ways, to accomplish the same end. This simultaneous movement of Divine providence stamps both dispensations with peculiar grandeur and significancy. It hath pleased him, at the very time when he poured the vials of his wrath upon the earth, to send forth his word and gospel, the rod of the Redeemer's strength, into all the earth, that his people may be made willing, in the day of his power. Since God has put the means for enlightening the world into activity, at that time, when he seems to be pouring out on the nations the vials of wrath; it encourages our hope, that these means shall introduce the glory of the latter day. Since he has brought those sad calamities on the earth, at the very time when he stirred up the minds of Christians to exert themselves, in an extraordinary way, for the conversion of the world; it strengthens our belief that those judgments are destined for the destruction of Antichrist. As there was a long preparation for the rise of Popery, in the church's gradual defection from the truth and purity of Christianity; so there shall be a long preparation for the millennial day, in the continued use of the means which are now in operation. As the church still grew worse and worse till the Man of sin was placed in his seat; so those means shall become more and more efficient, and our signs shall brighten, till the millennial day shall break upon the world. Let Christians then work, and wait, and pray, and hope; let them cast out their anchors, and wish for the day; for God's combined operations of mercy and judgment may assure them, that his kingdom, in her millennial glory, is at hand.

AN
I N Q U I R Y

INTO

THE PROPHETIC NUMBERS WHICH ARE CONTAINED IN THE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND FIVE AND THIRTY DAYS, MENTIONED AT THE END OF DANIEL'S PROPHECY.

DISCOURSE IV.

MARK i. 15.—*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

IN some Scripture predictions, God has condescended to reveal both the events that shall come to pass, and the time at which they shall be accomplished. This he has done with respect to the wandering and suffering condition of Abraham and his posterity, from the time of the Patriarch's departure from Haran, till the time of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Gen. xv. 13, Exod. xii. 40, 41. This method is taken, with respect to the Jews' captivity in Babylon, Jer. xxv. 11, 12. It pleased the Lord, concerning that most important of all events, the death of Christ, to do the same thing. "And after three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself," Dan. ix. 26. In those predictions which relate to the rise and fall of Antichrist, and to the church's sufferings under that power, and to her deliverance from it, the character and conduct of the former, and the condition and actings of the latter are described, and the duration of both the one and the other is also distinctly marked. If we had a certain knowledge of the time, at which these events began, it would be very easy to fix the season at which they shall terminate. But, in the dispensations of his wise and holy providence, God, whose way is in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known, has so ordered events, at the beginning of that time, as casts a veil of darkness over it; in consequence of which considerable uncertainty

ty about it rests on the minds of men, and different opinions have been held by those who have investigated it. Since the prophetic numbers are revealed, and the principal occurrences are on record, it is the church's duty to search after the knowledge of the time, when her greatest earthly enemy shall fall, and when she shall enjoy her promised felicity. With the deepest humility, with the most profound reverence, and with the strongest dependence on Divine direction, should imperfect and erring man engage in searching into the mysteries of the word and providence of the Most High God. Desiring these dispositions, though not possessing them in any high degree, let us now proceed to consider the

IV. Branch of this subject.—To make some remarks concerning Daniel and John's prophetic numbers, which are contained in the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days, mentioned at the end of Daniel's prophecy.

1. The 1335 days are Daniel's gross number, which has a respect to the church's low condition, and to the reign and tyranny of the Antichristian horn. It is mentioned Dan. xii. 12, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." In this number there are three other numbers included, and they are brought before us in this chapter. The first of them is mentioned in verse 7; "That it shall be for a time, times, and an half." This number, as will afterwards be proved, contains three years and half a year, or 1260 days. The second of these numbers is stated in verse 11—"There shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." In this number there is an addition of 30 days made to 1260 days. Those 30 days constitute Daniel's second number. The third number is discovered by what is said in the 12 verse:—"Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." From this it is evident, that 45 days are added to the 1290 days, which raise that number to 1335 days. The period of 45 days forms Daniel's third number. This is Daniel's statement of the times which represent Antichrist's rise and ruin, and the church's sufferings and deliverance. First 1260 days, then 30 days, and afterwards 45 days, making in all 1335 days. This gross, or general number, contains the period which Daniel's predictions contemplate, and they will not be completely fulfilled till the 1335 days expire. Daniel's three

particular numbers, being the component parts of his gross number, are entirely successive, and each of them shall begin at the day when the number before it did end. The only number mentioned by John, in the book of his Revelations, relating to the continuance of Antichrist's power, and to the sufferings of the church, is the 1260 days, which corresponds exactly, in duration, with Daniel's first number. These are the numbers which we are now to consider.

2. The 1260 days are twice mentioned by Daniel, and he states this number in the same form of words. In chap. vii. 25, it is, "A time, and times, and the dividing of time." In chap. xii. 7, it is, "A time, times, and an half." This number is once mentioned by John, in the same way. In Rev. xii. 14, it is, "A time, and times, and half a time." John also states this number in two other forms, and twice in each of them. We have the following account of it, Rev. xi. 2, "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." And again, chap. xiii. 5, "And power was given to him to continue forty and two months." The third form in which John represents this number, is found, chap. xi. 3, "And they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three-score days, clothed in sackcloth." He also represents it in the same way, chap. xii. 6, "That they should feed her there, a thousand two hundred and three-score days." Those different representations describe a number of the same duration. The time, and times and an half, signify one year, two years, and half a year; or three years and a half. This number contains exactly forty and two months; and, allowing thirty days to each month, according to the Jewish manner of calculating time, both the three years and an half, and the forty-two months, contain exactly one thousand two hundred and sixty days. The beautiful harmony of those descriptions of this number establishes the truth of this explanation of them, and shows that they describe a period of the same duration. This will also appear from the events which are predicted to happen under all those descriptions of this time. That the time, and times, and half a time, of John, are the same with his one thousand two hundred and three-score days, is confirmed by Rev. xii. 6, 14. In verse 6, it is said, "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there, a thousand two hundred and three-score days." In verse 14, it is said, "And to the

woman were given the wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Since the church's low condition, in her wilderness state, and God's care of her there, are represented both by the 1260 days, and the time, and times, and half a time; we must, therefore, conclude that those two representations must describe the same portion of time. The time, and times, and an half, mentioned by Daniel, signify in general, the same time that is mentioned by John's forty and two months; because the former, describes the season in which the church is given up to the little horn of the Roman beast, and the latter signifies the period during which the Gentiles shall tread under foot the holy city, and when the beast, which is the head of those Gentiles, shall have power to continue in his blasphemy, persecution and war. As the sufferings of the church under the little horn, are the same with the witnesses' prophesying in sackcloth, and the woman's remaining in the wilderness, both of which is for 1260 days, this period must in general coincide with Daniel's three years, and a half. From this agreement in their signification, the similarity of the meaning of these representations of this number is satisfactorily demonstrated.

3. Each of the days, which is contained in the number of 1260, and in the additional numbers of 30 and 45, is the prophetic symbol for one year. According to this view of the first number, the time of the beast's war with the church, and of her depressed state, must continue for the long season of 1260 years. Besides, there are two other numbers, which must be added to Daniel's 1260 years, one of 30; and another of 45 days, which must expire before the church's happy condition will begin. The 30 days must also signify 30 years, and the 45 days must represent 45 years; and these, being added together, form Daniel's gross number, of one thousand three hundred and five and thirty years. From the nature of the predicted events, this method of reckoning the prophetic numbers is necessary. Since the predictions will not apply to the providences, unless this method is observed; it plainly proves, that this was the design of the Spirit of prophecy, in making those revelations to men.—Besides, this application of a day for a year, is of Divine institution. To the Prophet Ezekiel the Lord said, "I have appointed thee, each day for a year," chap. iv. 6. The same thing is intimated by the Lord's

words to Israel, Num. xiv. 34:—"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, and ye shall know my breach of promise." As the writers on prophecy, are agreed in this view of the numbers, and as Christians who take an interest in those subjects, are understood to be of the same opinion, further discussion on it is unnecessary.

4. Distinct and important events, which will be most conspicuous accomplishments of Scripture predictions, will commence at the expiration of each of Daniel's three numbers, which are contained in his 1335 years. The sitting of the judgment will begin at the expiration of his time, and times, and half a time, or his 1260 years. In Dan. vii. 25, we are assured, that "the saints shall be given into the hand of the Antichristian horn, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." Again, in ver. 21, 22, it is said, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." From these texts, it is ascertained, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that Antichrist's domineering power over the church will continue till the end of Daniel's 1260 years; and that his war with the saints, and his prevalence over them are terminated, at the coming of the Ancient of days, and when the judgment shall begin to sit. These two events must happen together, at the end of Daniel's time, and times, and the dividing of time. His successful war with the church must cease, and the judgment to take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it to the end, must begin, when Daniel's 1260 days, or years, expire. The prophetic symbol by which the Prophet is directed to represent Antichrist's destruction, is that of a judge sitting on the judicial trial of a great state criminal. As among men, a capital criminal is rendered incapable of re-acting his crime, is suffered to live, and is permitted to defend himself, while the judgment is sitting on him; so the Antichristian beast while the judgment sits on him, shall be restrained, shall be permitted to exist, and shall be allowed to act in his own defence, till the judgment is finished, and the sentence is executed on him. The sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the coming of the third wo, in John's predictions, are the same with the sitting of the judgment, in those of Daniel. These are mentioned, Rev. xi. 14, 15, "The second wo is past, and behold the third wo

cometh quickly. And the seventh angel sounded." The seventh trumpet introduces the seven vials, and the third wo comprehends all the seven last plagues which are contained in the seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God. It follows then that the sitting of judgment, to destroy the dominion of Antichrist, will commence; and the effusion of the seven vials on the Roman earth, will begin, at the expiration of Daniel's 1260 years. The effects produced by the sitting of the judgment, in Daniel's prophecy, are the destruction of the Roman beast, and his little horn; and the saints possessing the kingdom. The effects produced by the effusion of the vials are the division of the Antichristian city into three parts; the fall of the cities of the nations, and great Babylon's drinking the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God; and the introduction and establishment on the earth of the millennial song, the marriage of the Lamb, and his marriage supper. From this it appears, that the sitting of the judgment in Daniel's prophecy, and the effusion of the vials in the visions of John, relate to the same transactions, shall be fulfilled at the same time, and will produce the same glorious results.

That public and solemn transaction which will commence at the expiration of the 30 years, or, counting from the beginning of the time, as Daniel does, the 1290 years, must now be considered. It is the opinion of some writers on prophecy, that those 30 years are the time in which the vials of Divine wrath shall be poured on the earth. As those years belong to the season when the judgment shall sit, they must be a part of that time, which is appointed for the effusion of the vials; but that those judgments of God on his enemies shall terminate, when these years expire, is more than we are warranted to assert. Let us attend to the Prophet's words, in which this number is mentioned:—"And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." Those words very plainly describe what shall be done, at the commencement of the 1290 years, and characterize the time, from which they are to be dated. When the Christian religion, in the purity of its doctrine, worship, and administrations, shall be suspended; and when the Antichristian abomination, which spreads desolation over the church, shall be established; at that fatal time these 1290 years begin. In the text, however, nothing is

said concerning the event which shall happen at their termination. As nothing is said of this number in any other part of Scripture, we must either remain ignorant of the event which will be brought to pass at his conclusion, or fix it by mere conjecture, or endeavour to come at the knowledge of it from the preceding context. While we, in considering prophecy, should avoid all conjectures, and be willing to remain ignorant, when God is pleased to withhold information; yet we are warranted to employ the light, which the prophecy in general spreads around us, for explaining any of its parts. If we look into the foregoing part of this chapter, Daniel xii. we will find that the deliverance of the Jews is mentioned once and again, as a special object, concerning which Daniel received information. We may, on that account, consider it as the event which will commence, at the expiration of the 1290 years. In this view of the matter, the eleventh verse may be supplied from the first and seventh verses, in the following way:—And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, till the time that thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book, and the time when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days, or years. We cannot conclude on this with absolute certainty, but from this connexion of things, we have some reason to hope, that at the expiration of Daniel's 1290 years, 30 years after the judgment begins to sit and the vials begin to be poured out, the conversion, and the restoration of the Jews to their own land, will have a conspicuous commencement.

We have no reason to doubt of that glorious transaction, which shall be accomplished among men, at the expiration of Daniel's number of 45 years, or counting from the beginning of this time, his 1335 years. The words of Daniel, where this number is mentioned, sufficiently explain it:—"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days," or years, ver. 12. The period of great blessedness shall then be introduced. It is not the blessedness of believers in general, which Daniel records in this verse. All those who wait in faith, though they should not come to the 1335 years, are blessed; yea, and they shall be blessed. But it is the peculiar blessedness of those who wait and come to the 1335 days, that Daniel's vision describes.

The blessedness of the millennial season, the glory of the millennial church, and the felicity of the millennial saints are here declared. By this part of the vision, Daniel's question, "What shall be the end of these things?" is fully answered. This is the same with that which is mentioned in Rev. xix. 9:—"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb; And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Then shall the church completely emerge from the wilderness—put off her sackcloth, and finish her witnessing prophecy. Then shall she celebrate her millennial song—partake of the marriage supper, and begin her reign with Christ a thousand years. Then shall the church be entirely delivered from the great works—the war, and the dominion of the Roman beast, and his little horn. "And then shall the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

5. From this view of Daniel's numbers, and the transactions that will begin at the expiration of each of them, we may be positively assured, that the judgment will begin to sit, or in the Prophet's words, the judgment shall be set, and the books opened, at the expiration of his first number, 1260 years. This shall also be the time when that great voice shall be uttered from heaven; "saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth." That at the expiration of his second number of 30 years, which being added to 1260, makes up his 1290 years, we have some reason to hope, that Israel's deliverance will begin. And at the expiration of his third number, of 45 years, which being added to the other numbers, makes 1335 years, we are assured the glorious season of the church's purity and rest, shall take its auspicious commencement. The Prophet's words warrant us to believe, that the last year of the 45 years, or, which is the same, the last year of the 1335 years, will be the first year of the blessed millennium. It cannot begin sooner; for the church is not blessed till she wait and come to that year: It cannot be delayed till a following year; for when that year shall arrive, her blessedness shall begin. If we add Daniel's two last numbers together, 30 and 45, we will have 75 years. As the last of those years belongs to the millennium, it must be taken from that number which will leave the number of 75 years. This is the time during which the

judgment shall sit on the little horn, and the vials shall be poured out on the Roman earth. These, we are certain, will commence, when Daniel's 1260 years shall expire, on the first year of the 30 years, or which is the same thing, on the first year of the 74 years. As there is no interval between the complete destruction of the little horn with the Roman beast, and the saints possessing the kingdom; as there is no interval between the final ruin of Antichrist with the lamentations of the kings, of the merchants, and the sailors over it, and the church's millennial song, but the latter is represented, both by Daniel and John, as immediately succeeding the former; the final sitting of the judgment, the last drop of the vials, the decisive stroke of the Armageddon war, or the consummating effect of all the three, shall all take place in the 74th year, or, calculating from the beginning of the times, which is the very same thing, in the 1334th year. This work of judgment being finished, the glorious millennium shall begin in the 75th year, or in the 1335th year, according to the infallible declaration of the Spirit of prophecy, speaking in Daniel, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."—These conclusions are deduced with confidence, and reasonable contradiction seems to be impossible.

6. Different dates have been assigned for the commencement, and the termination of the 1260 years. On this important matter, writers on prophecy have not agreed. There were different times of the Jews' captivity to Babylon, and as many corresponding periods of their return. As Babylon was a type of Antichrist, and as the sufferings of the Jews in Chaldea, prefigured the church's low state under popery; it is not unreasonable to suppose, that something of the same kind may be found in the church's liberation from Babylon the great. As there was one principal captivity to Babylon, and one most general and public return, in which Jeremiah's predictions were visibly fulfilled; so there must be one period for Antichrist's rise, and a corresponding one for his fall, at the former of which the church is brought into bondage, and at the latter she obtains deliverance, in which the predictions of Daniel and John shall have their principal and most conspicuous accomplishment. There was about the space of 1260 years, between the time of Constantine, who, by his extravagant favours bestowed on the Christian clergy, early in the fourth century, laid the foundation for

Antichristian domination, and the establishment of the Protestant reformation, a little after the middle of the sixteenth century. Though there is no reason to consider the former of those events as the rise, or the latter as the fall of Antichrist, yet the one was such a preparation for his coming, and the other such a presage of his destruction, as render both those occurrences in Divine providence worthy of our serious consideration. Some valuable writers have fixed the date of Antichrist's rise at the middle of the eighth century, when Pepin, King of France, in the year 756, raised him to the dignity of a temporal prince. This period will carry us forward, for the ending of the 1260 years, to the twenty-first century, and it would terminate in the year 2016. As the Pope's possession of civil power is not essential to his Scriptural characters, as the Man of sin, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet,* and as the grant of Pepin rather raised him to his height, than gave him birth, there does not seem to be any valid reason for considering that period to be the rise of the Papacy. Something, however, may take place in the millennial church, at the time which corresponds with this period of the Pope's aggrandizement, near the beginning of the twenty-first century, which may be very remarkable. About that time, perhaps, the unexplored parts of the earth, where the foot of civilized man has never trodden, may submit to the sceptre of Jesus; such as the interior of Africa, of the American Continents, of New Holland, and some parts of Asia, or the undiscovered islands of the sea. There are other two dates of the rise of popery, and, of course, also of its fall, about which modern writers on prophecy are divided in opinion. One of these dates is in the year 533, when the Emperor Justinian constituted the Bishop of Rome, the Head over all the churches. The other date is in the year 606, when the Emperor Phocas declared the Bishop of Rome to be the Head of the church. Of the decree of Phocas, it is affirmed, there is no record; it is only mentioned in history. Of the decree of Justinian there is a solemn record, and all the accompanying documents are yet extant. It has also been said, that the decree of Phocas was only a ratification of Justinian's decree, and rather confirmed to the Bishop of Rome the supremacy over the church, than conferred on him that Antichristian dignity. According to this view of Antichrist's rise in

533, Daniel's 1260 years have expired, the seventh trumpet has sounded, the third wo has come, the vials have begun to be poured out, and the judgment began to sit in the year 1792, when that most uncommon, general, destructive, and judgment-like war, that Europe ever saw, had its dismal commencement. From 533 till 1792 inclusive of these years, we have Daniel's number of 1260 years. The 30 additional years, and the number of 1290 years, will terminate in 1822, when the public conversion and restoration of Israel will probably begin. The second additional number of 75 years, and the gross number of 1335 will come to their end in 1867, exactly 50 years from the present time;* when Satan's kingdom, in its Heathenish—Mahometan—Jewish, and Popish forms, shall have fallen as lightning from heaven; when the conversion of Jacob's seed, and their return to their own land will be perfected; when the protestant churches will be revived and purified; when the pagan, mahometan, and antichristian nations will be enlightened and turned to the Lord; and when the church, in her millennial glory, purity and rest, will be established on the earth.

7. It is humbly submitted, if the two dates last mentioned, about which modern writers differ, may not be perfectly reconciled, by the following view of the predictions of Daniel and John. Let us suppose, that the 1260 years, mentioned by Daniel, began at 533, the first of those dates; and that John's 1260 years commenced at 606, the second date. In this scheme John's number will end in 1866, and Daniel's three numbers, reserving the last year in them for the first of the Millennium, will end in the very same year, in 1866. This singular coincidence in the dates, and their answering so exactly to the numbers of the Prophet, and to the number of the Apostle, so as to cause both of them terminate in the same year, certainly deserves our attention. The reasons for suggesting this idea of the times are the following:

The additional numbers of 30 and 45 are necessary, in the prophecies of Daniel, to express the time that must elapse, from the rise of Antichrist till the beginning of the millennium. No notice is taken, of those numbers—no reference is made to them in the visions of John. From this we conclude, that these additional numbers are not to be employed in explaining John's number. Since John does

not mention Daniel's gross number of 1335, nor his additional numbers of 90 and 45; they were not contemplated by him, as belonging to his scheme, nor must they be introduced by us, in order to explain it. John's prophecies, being the last, are the most full and particular; they illuminate the predictions of Daniel. They are, however, two different schemes of prophecy, in which, though they most harmoniously agree, different numbers and symbols are employed. John mentions his number five several times, and in three different forms, and mentions no other number; the symbolical representation of his scheme of prophecy is larger and more systematic than that of Daniel; and by detached visions different parts of his scheme are sometimes exhibited in miniature, and are sometimes amplified; can we therefore suppose, if the superadded numbers of the Prophet had been necessary to explain the predictions of the Apostle, that they would not be mentioned in his visions?*

There is a necessity that John's number of 1260, and Daniel's number of 1335 should terminate at the same time; but there does not appear to be the same necessity for their commencing together. They must terminate at the same time, because John's 1260 years must continue till the beginning of the millennium, as he does not mention any other number which intervenes between the end of the former, and the commencement of the latter. In John's 1260 years, the time of the vials, or the season of judgment, must be included, because his prophecy mentions no other number of years, in which these transactions are to be accomplished.† Daniel's number of 1335 years exceeds John's 1260 years, by 75 years. As the last of those years belongs to the millennial period, and coincides with the first year in John's 1000 years, it must be separated from the number, and we have 74 years. Since the only wise God, as the Author of prophecy, has given us two schemes of time, the one of which exceeds the other by 74 years; and since He, as the God of providence, has given us two conspicuous dates, whose claim to be the rise of Antichrist is so nearly equal, and whose distance from one another, inclusive of the first year, is exactly 74 years, there appears to be good reason, from this remarkable coincidence of time, to adopt this method of reconciling them.

Besides, if Daniel's numbers do not begin at 533, that most con-

* See Appendix.

† See Appendix.

spicuous and best attested date of Antichrist's rise is altogether overlooked in prophecy; which is a conclusion that those who have a due regard to Him, who is the giver of prophecy, and the God of providence, will not be easily persuaded to believe. If it is maintained that Daniel's 1260 years do not commence till 606, the judgment will not sit, the Ancient of days will not come, the seventh angel will not sound his trumpet, and none of the vials included in the third wo will be poured out till 1866; for Daniel undoubtedly fixes the sitting of the judgment, at the expiration of his time, and times, and the dividing of time, or at the end of the 1260 years, as they are mentioned by him. This is a conclusion entirely at variance with the opinion of those, who plead for Antichrist's rise in 606. If there is not a scheme of prophecy which contemplates the rise of Antichrist at 606, then that providential dispensation, which took place in that year, is also disregarded in Divine predictions, which reflects no honour on Him whose works are the fulfilment of his word. Since God, in his holy providence, has furnished us with two conspicuous dates, for the entering of the Man of sin into the Lord's temple; and since he, in his holy word, has revealed a double scheme of numbers relating to the rise and fall of Antichrist, and to the subjugation and emancipation of his church, one of which dates exactly agrees to the numbers of Daniel, and the other to the number of John, and both harmoniously terminate in the same year, it must be exceedingly probable, if not absolutely certain, that it was God's design to mark out to the church that most important era, by this twofold account of it.

No valid objection can be made to the accuracy of these calculations, arising from our beginning Daniel's numbers with the 538d year of the Christian era, and not at the termination of that year; or from our beginning John's number, at the end of 606, and not with that year. The former was the eastern mode of calculating time, when Daniel's predictions were delivered, and when the seat of empire was established in the east. The usage of the time, and place of Daniel's visions must necessarily be employed, in explaining his prophetic numbers. The latter was the western mode of computing time, when John saw his visions, and when the seat of empire was transferred to the western part of the earth. The custom of that time and place must also be observed, in explaining the commencement and termination of John's number.

Since this method of explaining and reconciling those numbers, so far as I know, has not been formerly used; since it may have a tendency to unite the opinions of authors, on this interesting inquiry, concerning the beginning and the ending of those numbers; since it seems to lay a solid foundation for our hope, concerning the time when all those things shall be fulfilled; and since it appears to display the wisdom and harmony of the word and works of God, it is most respectfully submitted to the consideration of Christian professors.

With a few reflections, which the foregoing remarks seem to suggest, this discourse shall be concluded.

1. We must carefully distinguish between a Divine prediction and an human explanation of it; between scriptural numbers mentioned in prophecy, and men's calculations concerning their beginning and ending. The one is perfect and certain, the other may be very imperfect and false. Though human interpretations of prophecy should prove fallacious, the error attaches, not to the prediction, but to the explanation of it; not to the Author of prophecy, but to the fallible interpreter. Though human calculations should prove erroneous, the prophetic numbers themselves are without error. Our disappointment, by a false explanation of a prediction, ought not to engender in our minds any prejudice or objection at the prophecy itself. Very unreasonable it will be to undervalue the prediction, because of the error of its explanation; and to charge God foolishly, on account of the mistakes of men. Though Divine providence should sweep away, to their very foundations, the explanations and calculations of men; the Divine prediction will still stand sure like an immovable rock, and will be accomplished in its season, and in all its parts. Divine predictions and human explanations must be distinguished also as to our esteem of them. All our esteem of that which is human, should centre on that which is Divine. Any regard we may have for the labours of men, on those subjects, should increase our love and admiration of the Author of prophecy, who only could reveal it, and who alone can make it come to pass. There is also a difference between these two objects, in the manner in which we should examine them. In our examination of scripture prophecy, reverence for the glorious Author of it, a certain belief of its truth, and an humble desire to

know the mind of God, by the light of his own Spirit, should fill our hearts. In coming to the examination of an explanation of prophecy, the Christian's mind, not being freed from the fear of error in the object of his consideration, ought to exercise guarded suspicion, and ought rather to delay, than rashly to form his opinion.

2. In scripture prophecy, there will be found such a mystery, majesty, and beauty, as should raise our admiration of its Author, and attract our attention to itself. Of all Divine predictions, this is the infallible description; "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Holy persons who were sanctified of God, uninfluenced by their own will, and guided and taught by the Divine Spirit, delivered those messages of God to men, messages which are full of mystery, majesty, and beauty. Of all scripture predictions, there are none which possess those qualities more eminently than the prophecies of Daniel and John, respecting the grand Antichrist, and the Church of the living God. The symbols, that are used to represent those very different objects, are most appropriate and significant. Their diversity in the two schemes hurts not their unity, darkens not their meaning, but rather illustrates and confirms their application to the objects which they represent. The different numbers that are mentioned cordially harmonize, and tend to confirm our minds in the truth of their application. Systematic forms of representing a long series of events, by a long war, and the solemn session of a court of judgment, by the opening of seven seals, the sounding of seven trumpets, and the pouring out of seven vials; and by collateral visions, some of which give a more summary, and others a more detailed description of the same things, plainly mark the whole structure of the predictions, to be the offspring of Divine wisdom, and the fulfilment of it, to be the effect of Divine power. As the millennial church shall praise God for its accomplishment; let us thank him for its revelation, and wait its issue.

3. Divine predictions shall be assuredly fulfilled. The giver of prophecy is the God of providence. He does what he will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Prophecy contains promises and threatenings; promises when it respects the church, and threatenings when his enemies are the objects of it.

His faithfulness and power are engaged to fulfil his promises to his people; prophecy, so far as it contains a revelation of good things to the church, shall therefore be fulfilled. The Divine veracity and power are also interested in executing the threatenings against his enemies; prophecy, therefore, in so far as it exhibits them, shall assuredly come to pass. "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time, for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself concerning his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none to stand up for them." Very considerable parts of those predictions have been already accomplished, and shall we suspect the fulfilment of the rest? The most dismal parts of them, concerning the rise and reign of the enemy, have come to pass; we should not, therefore, hesitate about the accomplishment of those parts of the prediction, which are more glorious and joyful. As the time of Antichrist's elevation has come, so the season of his destruction shall arrive. Since the predictions concerning the church's sufferings have been fulfilled, those which relate to her blessedness and glory shall likewise be accomplished. "God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Num. xxiii. 19.

4. The present appearances in the religious world encourage the hope, that some great and happy change among men is fast approaching. The extraordinary endeavours that are now made, to send the word and gospel of Christ into all the earth, seem to be the harbinger of this change, and the means by which it will be effected. These endeavours are of such a nature, of such variety, of such extent, and have produced already such wonderful effects, as render it very probable that the grand millennial season may come at the time to which our view of the prophetic numbers has conducted us. The Bible Societies, for instance, have existed only thirteen years. There are precisely four times that number of years from the present time* till the year 1867. If those Societies have accomplished such great things in these thirteen years, in part of

* 1817.—When this Discourse was delivered.

which period the scheme has been in its infancy ; what may we suppose it will accomplish, if it is continued, with the Divine blessing, for fifty years longer? It is not at all unreasonable to expect, that by the time that the Sixty-second annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society shall be published, all the parts of the earth will have been, for a considerable time, in possession of the Holy Scriptures. If they shall be in possession of the Divine word, may we not hope, that they shall also be turned from dumb idols, to the service of the living God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Respecting the evangelic missions—the schools—the circulation of religious tracts, and the endeavours to graft Israel into their own olive-tree, the same method of reasoning might be adopted. If these different attempts to set up the Redeemer's kingdom among men, have, in the short time that is past, done great and wonderful things; may we not confidently expect, if their labours are continued half a century longer, the blessing of God, and the working of the Spirit accompanying them, that all the ends of the earth may then see the salvation of our God. From these things it appears, even by the light of human probability, that we have reason to expect, that the great and glorious day of the Lord may come at the time that was mentioned. If the view that we have taken of the prophetic numbers be correct, as we hope it is, then it may be said ;—" We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts."

5. The knowledge of the particular stage, in the church's journey, at which she has now arrived, and in which she is now moving forward to the promised land of her millennial rest, is a very desirable, and important attainment. Though it would be most unbecoming to speak with presumptuous confidence, or in the language of absolute certainty, concerning the precise time, yet a fair application of the predicted events, and the prophetic numbers, to the past and present operations of providence, and to the seasons in which the Lord has brought them to pass, will enable us, with strong probability, to answer those weighty interrogations:—" Watchman, what of the night?" How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? Our opinion is this—That Daniel's 1260 years, began with the 533d year of the Christian era, and ended at 1792; that his additional number of 30 years, which makes his first number 1290, beginning

where the former ended, will expire in 1822; and his third number of 45 years, which completes his gross number of 1335 years, will end in 1867, the last year of which will be the first of the blessed millennium, which will also be the first year of John's 1000 years. With this calculation John's number perfectly agrees, when dated from 606, the second date of the rise of popery; because from 606 to 1866 there are 1260 years. The judgment against the little horn, and for the church's deliverance and exaltation, has been sitting, and the vials have been pouring out since 1792.—These will be continued till 1866, and will be completely finished on that year. The blessed state of the church will commence in 1867, the year to which those who wait and come are blessed. This happy period of the church shall be continued 1000 years, or, for a long time. After which the millennial day will have a short evening, called "a little season," which will be followed by the general judgment. These are the conclusions to which we are led, by this investigation of the prophetic numbers. That they are perfectly correct and infallibly true, we dare not assert; but that they are probable, and worthy of our consideration, there is some reason to believe. According to this view, we have now passed through one third part of the time of the sitting of the judgment, and the effusion of the vials; and two thirds of that time, or 49 years, from the expiration of this year, 1817, remain yet to be fulfilled. The 25 years of this season, which have now passed over us, have been most eventful, both for the Divine judgments which have been on the earth, and for the means that have been employed for illuminating and converting the nations to the faith of Jesus. The 49 years of this season that are yet to come, will also be full of most important events. During that time, the Lord will, on the one hand, perform the remaining part of his strange work of judgments, of one kind or other, on his Anti-christian enemies, till they are removed from the earth; and, on the other hand, he will give increasing activity and success to the means of grace that are and shall be used, for filling the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, till all nations are prepared for entering into the millennial glory, when "there shall be one fold and one shepherd, one Lord and his name one."

6. An humble examination of the predictions of God's word, and a religious observation of the dispensations of his providence, constitute a necessary part of that duty which is incumbent on Chris-

tians, especially at such a time as this. The command to search the Scriptures comprehends the former, and the injunction to regard the operations of his hands includes the latter. The neglect of either of them must be a great evil. Let us, therefore, turn our attention frequently to the word and to the works of God. To his word which foretells the events of those times, and to his works which fulfil his word. Indifference and inattention to those things are sinful and profane. The want of zeal for the Divine glory, and a concern for the kingdom of Christ and the salvation of men, are the causes of this criminal negligence. Religious exercise about the words of his mouth, and the doings of his hand, even though we may be disappointed in some of our expectations, is unspeakably better than a careless neutrality in the cause of God and religion. The difficulties which attend this investigation, should not deter us from essaying it. In your meditation on those things, cry to the Lord, by prayer, for his counsel and direction. Take the help of your Christian brethren's knowledge and experience in those matters, by familiar conversation about them with one another. Compare different parts of Scripture together, and separate dispensations of providence with each other; that the light you obtain from all, may help you to understand that which seems most difficult and dark. Be not discouraged by the want of success in any one attempt; but renew your endeavours, in the hope of succeeding better, through grace, on another occasion. Let not your searchings into God's words and works, lead you to vain speculation; but make such an use of them as will influence your inward exercise, and direct your outward conduct. Happy will you be, if those endeavours you exert in searching his word, and in observing his operations, impress more deeply on your souls, those words of Jesus; "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

AN

INQUIRY

INTO

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY AT THIS INTERESTING CRISIS.

DISCOURSE V.

MARK i. 15.—*Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

DIVINE dispensations to the church, whether of mercy or of judgment, should excite her members to the exercise of godliness. As this should be the fruit of all those private and personal providences, by which we receive good or evil at the hand of the Lord; so his public providences to the church, of either kind, should produce on us the same effect. As the saints are called to live by faith, the sure prospect of the church's trials and deliverances, on the warrant of the word of God, ought to lead them to religious exercises. Without this, Christians will be unprepared for those sad or joyful events when they occur; but, in this frame of mind, they will be enabled, under the former, to be patient in tribulation, and under the latter, to praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. In our text, the Lord Jesus informed men of that change which he would effect, by his coming into the world. He would put an end to that season of imperfection, darkness and spiritual bondage; and would introduce among men a time of light, liberty, and reformation. The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. That the generation might be prepared for that important alteration, he calls them to such religious duties as would be a mean of making them ready for those Divine providences, by which this change should be accomplished:—Repent ye, and believe the gospel. As our circumstances

are very similar to those of the Jews, when Christ began his public ministry among them; the exhortation which he addressed to them, must be peculiarly suited to us. At all times, and in every condition, Christ's exhortation is adapted to the situation of his followers; but when the church is approaching to that crisis, when Antichrist's reign shall be fulfilled, and when the millennial kingdom of God is at hand, the Christians of this generation should apply to themselves, the Redeemer's warning call,—“Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” The duties which are comprehended in this command are very many; but their number does not exceed their necessity and importance. It is usual in the Scriptures to exhibit many profitable duties in a few particulars, and sometimes in those which are mentioned in the text. In a most solemn and farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, Paul declares the grand substance of the gospel he had preached; “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” Acts xx. 21. The Great Teacher, who came from God, exemplified this in our text, Repent ye, and believe the gospel. Let us now proceed to the

V. General branch of our subject. To state the Christian's duty at the present time by shewing what is included in Christ's command,—Repent ye, and believe the gospel.

1. This command requires of us a proper knowledge of the objects, about which faith and repentance are versant. Repentance has a relation to sin, and faith has a respect to the gospel. A knowledge of sin is necessary to our exercising repentance, and an understanding of the gospel is requisite to our believing it. Repentance, therefore, has a relation to our transgressions. None of God's rational creatures can be the subjects of repentance, but those who have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. A superficial knowledge of sin cannot be a sufficient foundation for genuine repentance. It is that understanding of it, which is conveyed into the soul, by the light of God's word, and the operation of the Divine Spirit. The precepts and threatenings of the holy law are, by Divine agency, powerfully applied to the sinner's conscience, when the person obtains that knowledge of sin, that is followed by true repentance. They know it in its evil nature, as it is an act of rebellion against the authority and law of the King eternal, as it is

hateful in his sight, and as it is infinitely dishonouring to him. They see it in its guilt and demerit as it exposes them to Divine wrath, to the curse of the law, and to everlasting punishment. They discern its pollution as it defiles all the faculties of their souls, the members of their bodies, and all religious duties. They experience that power which it exercises over them, and from which they cannot deliver themselves. They are convinced of the sin of their nature of their thoughts, words, and actions. They obtain such discoveries of their sin as constrain them to say, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me." Faith has for its object the glorious gospel, the knowledge of which is necessary to our believing it. True Christians know the gospel, by the light of the Divine word shining into their hearts, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. They know it as a revelation of Divine grace and mercy to sinners through the Lord Jesus. The substance of it is declared in the angelic message:—"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," Luke ii. 10. 11. They perceive it to be a display of Divine love to men, in the gift of his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. They know the gospel as a revelation and offer to them of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his person, as he is God and man; in his office as he is the Mediator between God and man; in his righteousness, which he brought in by his obedience, sufferings and death; in his fulness of Spirit and grace for supplying all his people's wants; and in his everlasting salvation, which he will bestow on those who trust in him. They know the gospel as a revelation of the Holy Spirit who quickens, enlightens, sanctifies, and comforts believers in the ways of godliness. Without this knowledge of the gospel, none can believe it to the saving of their souls.

2. The duty which Christ enjoins includes a knowledge of the nature of saving faith, and evangelic repentance. Those who have obtained the precious faith of God's elect, have a scriptural knowledge of it; and those who are blessed with repentance unto life, are enabled to understand it. They know the grace of faith in its nature and actings. In its nature they see it to be a supernatural

principle implanted in their heart, and in its actings they find it is a compliance with the whole revelation of Divine grace in Christ, for the salvation of their souls. Christ, and the grace of God in him, are the great substance of the gospel. Those who are enabled, with all their hearts, to exercise an holy complacency, in the grace of God reigning through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord, do believe the gospel. Faith in its actings is a receiving Christ, an embracing him in all his offices, a coming to him by a motion of the soul, a looking to him by the eye of the mind, a resting on him, and a trusting in him with the whole heart, for enjoying all the blessings that are contained in the promises of God. This faith ultimately receives and rests on God, the Father, for the enjoyment of all salvation, through the mediation of his dear Son. By him do the saints believe in God who raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that their faith and hope might be in God.—They have also a scriptural knowledge of true repentance. They find that the actings of that grace in them, are as various, necessary and important, as are the actings of their faith. Having obtained a sight of the evil nature of their sin, having searched into their transgressions in heart and life, and having seen themselves to be guilty, miserable and lost sinners; they accuse and condemn themselves, they mourn over their sin, they afflict their souls before the Lord on account of their iniquity, they confess it to God in all its aggravation, they acknowledge their desert of everlasting punishment, they hate sin with a perfect hatred, more for what it is in itself than for its consequences to them, they justify the Divine law, both in its precept and penalty, they look to the mercy of God through Christ's atonement for pardon, and they endeavour to fear God and avoid evil. In these spiritual exercises of the heart, believers are assured, that the grace of repentance does consist.

3. The Saviour's command includes an understanding of the way, in which a sinner is enabled to repent, and to believe the gospel. By the grace of God in Christ, provision is made for causing sinners obtain faith and repentance. Christians, who truly repent of their sin, and believe the gospel, are assured that they have not, by their own power, produced in themselves those precious exercises. Convinced that they are by nature children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sins, they will cheerfully confess, that they have received them from above. Repentance is the gift of God, "And

when they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," Acts xi. 18. To all who enjoy this precious grace it is the gift of the Divine Saviour. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. Faith is also the gift of God:—"For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8. It is likewise the gift and purchase of Christ:—"For to you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him," Philip. i. 29. The efficient cause of faith and repentance, and of their exercise in the soul, is stated in that great and precious promise, Zech. xii. 10—"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first-born." Faith and repentance are bestowed on sinners as the free gift of God's grace, through the merit and satisfaction of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit operating on them, through the instrumentality of the word. Their renewed exercise in the saints is produced in the same way. Faith and repentance are planted in the hearts of men at the same time, when they are blessed with the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The renovated soul exercises faith in Christ first in the order of nature, and evangelic repentance necessarily follows. When the Spirit of grace is poured on the soul, the person first looks, by an act of faith, on Jesus whom he has pierced by his sins, and then he mourns and is in bitterness for the transgressions which he has committed against him. The exercise of faith on Christ, by receiving and resting on him according to the gospel offer and call, is necessary to interest us in him; and a saving interest in Jesus is necessary to our evangelic repentance. Of whatever nature the repentance of men may be, there is a faith of the same kind which must go before it. A legal repentance cannot exist in any person without a legal faith, or a belief of the law, both in its precept and threatening, with an application of it to the person's own conscience. Nor can there be an evangelic repentance in the hearts of men, till they exercise faith

in the gospel, and in him whom it reveals to them, as a Saviour from guilt and punishment.

4. The Saviour's injunction requires of us an earnest concern and endeavour to be possessed of faith and repentance. When we are convinced of the excellency of those spiritual principles, a desire to enjoy them will fill our minds. This desire will excite in us a concern to obtain them; and this concern will constrain us to use every appointed mean, that we may receive power from on high to repent, and to believe the gospel. Sensible of our need of those saving graces, convinced of our inability to produce them in ourselves, and encouraged by the promise of God in Christ Jesus to bestow them on us, we will bow our knees before God's throne, and cry to him, that he may fulfil in us the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power. Fixing our attention on the Divine promise to pour on us the Spirit of grace and supplication, that we may look on him, and mourn for sin, we will plead for its accomplishment to us, through the mediation of his dear Son. Reading and meditation on the Divine word belong to those exertions which we should make, that we may obtain faith and repentance. Since the word of God is the mean by which the Spirit implants them in our hearts, searching the Scriptures, and thinking on them, must be adapted to our condition. Hearing the gospel preached to us is another mean for attaining the same end. God has often bestowed on sinners faith and repentance, and has revived the exercise of them in the saints, by this holy ordinance. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. In Peter's sermon to the multitude on the day of Pentecost, this was exemplified:—"Now, when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. Attending on the ordinance of a preached gospel, they were both filled with conviction of sin, and excited to ask for the way of salvation. Peter directs them to repentance, and to faith in Jesus Christ; the former is expressly mentioned, and the latter, is included in their being baptised in his name, for the remission of sin. He also presents to them the gospel encouragement:—"For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Those who comply with Christ's command, are not indifferent to those important concerns; but they

endeavour to use every mean, that they may obtain from God saving faith, and repentance unto spiritual and eternal life. Having been stirred up to this diligence in the use of the means, they will endeavour to believe, and to repent, to stretch out the withered hand, to come to Christ, to mourn for their sin, and to express before God their willingness and desire to be debtors to his grace in Christ for salvation. While under this concern, and while using those endeavours, the Spirit comes to the soul, and takes up his abode there, and produces in the heart saving faith, and true repentance. The person is then enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus for eternal life, and to pour out his soul in godly sorrow for sin, which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.

5. This command requires of us an habitual desire and endeavour, to live in the exercise of faith and repentance. Divine grace in the heart, being a living and active principle, must have its daily exercise. In its principle, it is in the soul a well of water; and in its exercise, by the Spirit's influence, it springeth up into everlasting life. The command, Repent ye, and believe the gospel, exhibits the habitual frame of the Redeemer's children. At no time are Christians exempted from the obligation of this command, to exercise faith and repentance; and at no time should they neglect those exercises. With the being of grace in his soul, no believer will be satisfied; but he will desire also the exercise of grace. The glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the comfort of his own soul are connected with the exercise of the believer's grace. This exercise consists in that believing and penitent frame, which the saints should habitually endeavour to maintain. To be thus spiritually minded is life and peace. The life that Paul lived in the flesh, was faith of the Son of God, who

It was Hezekiah's resolution to go softly all his years, in near of his soul. The whole time of the believer's sojourning in this world, should be passed in the fear of God. Since the will in believers, and in thought, word, and action, they are daily transgressing the law of the God of their salvation; repentance, humility, godly sorrow, and confession of sins should constitute a part of their habitual exercise. Since the object of faith is still presented to them in the gospel, and the call to believe is recorded there; a believing improvement of that object should be their daily study. In all religious duties, a believing and penitent frame of

spirit should be exercised. Without this, we will worship God with our mouth and honour him with our lips, while our hearts, by the want of the exercise of grace in them, will be far removed from him. When the saints are enabled to perform duties in the exercise of grace, they worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. It is the will of the Lord Jesus, that his people persevere continually in a penitent and believing frame, and they do not fulfil his will, nor obey his command, when this is not their earnest study.

6. Christ's command extends to that concern which Christians should have, that the evidence of their faith and repentance may be ever clear to their minds. The grace of God, in the souls of his people, has not its exercise only, but it has its evidence also. By this the believer knows that he is possessed of saving faith, and that to him God has granted repentance unto life. This must be a very comfortable attainment. A delight in the word of God, an attachment to religious ordinances, hatred of sin, the study of true holiness, an earnest concern for the dissemination of the knowledge of God among men, a love to the saints, an inclination to think and converse about religion, and a desire that God may be glorified by themselves and others, are some of the evidences of the truth of our faith, and of the sincerity of our repentance. Those who have attained to these things and exercise themselves in them with their whole heart's desire, exhibit satisfactory evidences that they, by Divine grace, have become penitent and believing saints. To have the word of Christ dwelling in us richly, to know in our experience, that it is good for us to draw near to God in the ordinances of Divine worship, to cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God, are distinguishing characters of penitent believers. To desire that the knowledge of God may fill the earth, to account the saints to be the excellent ones of the earth in whom is all our delight, to take pleasure in thinking and in talking of his doings, and to rejoice when God is glorified among men, will also prove that those who are the subjects of these exercises, are the children of the living God. To endeavour to cultivate those dispositions, and to apply them as evidences of the truth of our faith and repentance, must be our indispensable duty. By the former we lay up stores of evidences of the truth of our grace, and by the other we bring them forth as proofs of the reality of our personal religion.

If we become negligent in the one, we will soon find that we are impoverished as to the other. We must, therefore, exercise ourselves unto godliness, that the evidences of the reality of our faith and repentance may abound in us. It is by self-examination that those evidences are brought forward and applied, for ratifying this important matter. For this duty we have a Divine warrant:—"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove yourselves; know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates," or disapproved of God, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. When Christians engage in this duty, and enjoy the Spirit's witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God, they will be enabled to discern in themselves those religious exercises, which demonstrate that they are believing penitents. Christ's command, Repent ye, and believe the gospel, reaches even unto this; that Christians should diligently study all the parts of religious exercises, and that they apply every one of them, in self-examination, as evidences for confirming and comforting their hearts, in the knowledge of the truth of their faith and repentance.

7. This command also requires, that believers endeavour to reap the fruits, and to enjoy the blessings, which flow from the persevering and spiritual exercise of their faith and repentance. Those gracious principles have not their evidences only; but fruits and blessings accompany them, to the Divine glory and to the saint's benefit. This call, repent ye, and believe the gospel, must certainly require the saint's endeavour to enjoy the effects of the principle, and of the exercise of grace, in his own heart. An increase of true holiness in the Christian, is one of those effects. The actings of faith and repentance are special parts of inward holiness. As their exercise in the soul has an influence on love to God, on hope in him, on reverence and godly fear, and on humility, patience and resignation, all the parts of inward holiness are, in some degree, the fruits of their exercise. The believer's outward holiness, which consists in holy words and actions, flowing from the inward exercises of the soul, &c. on this account, the effects of the operation of faith and repentance.—Spiritual joy and comfort belong to those fruits which flow from a believing and penitent frame of soul. "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Strong consolation is enjoyed by those, who in a penitential and believing frame,

have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. We are also assured, that those who sow in the tears of believing penitence, shall reap in joy. Jesus also has said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." Spiritual establishment in the ways of God is a part of that fruit, which the exercise of faith and repentance is instrumental in producing. By the exercise of those graces, believers become more confirmed in their holy principles, practices, and profession. They are rooted and grounded in the faith, and settled, and have their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life. By a believing and penitent frame, believers are more delivered from doubts and fears, from uncertainty and wavering, from unbelief and hardness of heart. By these exercises, also, they become more confirmed in the faith and hope of the gospel.—Victory over Satan and the world is also a fruit of their exercise. "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." With this exhortation of Paul, that of Peter harmoniously agrees; "Whom resist stedfast in the faith." As the believer, by this frame, is enabled to vanquish Satan; so he is made to triumph over the world by the same exercise. This is contained in those words of John; "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." While those believers who are negligent in the exercise of their faith and repentance, will be overcome by their spiritual enemies; those who live in the daily exercise of them, will be enabled to tread on the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shall they trample under their feet.—Spiritual and heavenly mindedness must also be a part of those fruits, which proceed from a believing and repenting frame of soul. The exercise of those graces, under the influence of the Spirit, brings spiritual and heavenly objects into the mind, fixes the heart on them, causes the Christian seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and enables him to set his affections on things above, and not on the things of the earth.—Of these exercises, holy confidence in God through Christ, when the believer is under trouble, and in the prospect of death, will be the happy fruit. When the believer's faith and repentance are in exercise, he will be joyful in hope, and patient in tribulation. Privileged with the influence of the Spirit, and affected with God's word, the Christian, exercised

in a penitent and believing frame, will be enabled to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" Christ's command, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," lays an obligation on his people, to persevere in those exercises, till they have gathered up all those blessed fruits which are instrumentally produced by that faith which is of the operation of God, and by that repentance which is unto everlasting life.

8. Christ's command requires that his people exercise their faith and repentance, concerning that change, which he is accomplishing on the earth. This exhortation is connected with that information which is contained in the preceding part of the text. Christ had assured them that the time was fulfilled, and that the kingdom of God was at hand; and, in consequence of this he exhorts them to repent, and to believe the gospel. The information has a connexion with the advice, both as a motive to excite them to faith and repentance, and as a rule to guide them in those exercises. He called them to repent and to believe the gospel, because the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom of God was at hand; and they were to exercise those dispositions relative to the operations which they saw, and to the change that they expected. "Repent ye;" Be convinced of your own sins, mourn for them, pray for pardon, confess and forsake them; Be convinced of the imperfection even of those Divine ordinances, under which your fathers have lived, and of the sinfulness of those vain traditions which they have added to those ordinances, and which you have foolishly observed. Be affected with the sin, the idolatry, the darkness, and the misery of those nations who know not God, and call not on his name, "Believe the gospel;" Be ye persuaded that the times of ignorance and imperfection are now come to an end; and that the New Testament kingdom, which shall be extended to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, will immediately appear. Believe the gospel which I preach to you, and which my servants shall proclaim among men; and embrace the revelation of mercy to miserable sinners through my death, in which I will give my life a ransom for many. In like manner, we are called to exercise faith and repentance, with respect to the things that are promised; and are coming to pass in our own days, improving them both as a motive to animate, and as a rule to direct us in those exercises. God is now calling us to believe that the day is approaching, when the dark and dreary ages of popery and wickedness are coming to

an end, and that his millennial kingdom will soon be established. The predicted events which relate both to the fall of the Redeemer's enemies, and to the advancement of his church must be the objects of our faith and hope. * The things that are foretold concerning the illumination and conversion of the nations, and the recovery and salvation of Israel, will also be most assuredly believed, by all those who possess this precious faith. As those predictions exhibit objects of faith and hope, so the moral condition of those to whom they relate, furnish us with abundant causes of godly sorrow and repentance. Our own personal transgressions, the sins of God's church, the wickedness of Christ's enemies, the iniquities of the darkened parts of the earth, and the provocations of God's ancient people, as they are dishonouring to God and ruinous to immortal souls, will humble the pious Christian to the dust, will cause him pour out his soul in confession before God, will draw the tear of godly sorrow from his eyes, and will excite him to pray for mercy in Christ to himself, to others, and to the church of God. Since God, in his holy word, has revealed such things as these, without the belief of which, the gospel itself cannot be believed, let the consideration both of the joyful and of the awful things that are approaching, animate us to study a penitent and believing exercise of soul, under a conviction that Christ is now saying to us, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

With some inferences, taken from this part of the method in itself, and in its connexion with the other heads of the doctrine, I shall conclude this subject.

1. From it we may learn the knowledge of those things, in which the exercise of true and undefiled religion does consist. It does not consist in an outward profession of the gospel, in an external observation of Divine ordinances, in a visible circumspection of moral conduct, or in great pretensions to Christian knowledge and piety, by the words of the mouth. Commandable as these things are, they may be found in those who are destitute of true religion, who have the form of godliness, and who know nothing of its power. True religion consists in the exercise of saving faith, and evangelical repentance. Without these, there cannot be any real religion in fallen man. Christ's own words prove the necessity of those gra-

cious dispositions and exercises. "He that believeth not shall be damned. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Salvation is impossible, to an unbelieving and impenitent person. Those who shall be saved, are possessed of true faith, and sincere repentance; and they endeavour to live in the exercise of repentance toward God, and of faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the life and exercise of the saints. They have got such discoveries of sin, as constrain them to repent; and such views of the gospel, as induce them to believe it. They have got such a view of the nature and actings of faith and repentance, as makes them desire to possess them, and endeavour to exercise them continually. They are blessed with a scriptural knowledge of him, who is both the bountiful giver, and the glorious object of their faith. They know the means of obtaining and exercising these graces in their hearts, they know their evidences and their fruits, by all which they are filled with an earnest desire, that by the exercise of faith and repentance, they may live godly in Christ Jesus. By repenting of sin, they have frequent thoughts of the law, both in its precepts and threatenings; and by believing in Christ, their attention is often directed to the gospel, in its doctrines and promises. In the one they see their ruin by sin, and mourn, and turn from it; and in the other they see their recovery by Christ Jesus, and joyfully trust in him for everlasting life. By the Spirit's influence, and by the exercise of grace in them, they are led to the law that wounds them, and to the gospel that heals them; to sin that is the cause of their misery, and to Christ who of God is made unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. By all those things do believers live, and in every one of them is the life of their spirits. Seek earnestly a saving acquaintance with faith and repentance, endeavour to exercise them daily, and carefully preserve your minds from a doubting and hardened frame. Frequently meditate on the law and the gospel; on your sin and on the Saviour from sin. Inquire daily into the frame of your hearts about those objects. Employ yourselves in mourning and in repenting of sin, and in believing in Christ, in receiving him and walking in him.

2. From what was said we may see the evil and the aggravations of impenitence and unbelief. Christ having said to the people, Repent ye, and believe the gospel, they were laid under special obligations to obey this command. As it was promulgated in his own

name, and in the name of him who sent him, the disobedience of any of his hearers was rebellion against Divine and Mediatorial authority. Since the Divine record of this, and of similar precepts, has come down to us, they bind us to perform the same duties, equally with those who heard them pronounced; our unbelief and impenitence, therefore, must be rebellion against the same authority. By the sin of unbelief, we reject the council of God against ourselves, we disgrace the glorious Saviour, we vex and grieve the Holy Spirit, we neglect the great salvation, we plunge ourselves into everlasting wo. By the sin of impenitence, we refuse to turn to the way of life, we deliberately choose the path of death, we continue to walk in the broad way that leadeth to destruction, we surrender ourselves the voluntary slaves of sin and Satan, and we rush on the thick bosses of Jehovah's bucklers. O what evil is contained in those sins, and with what aggravations must they be accompanied! Oh, that we were wise. that we understood those things, and that we would consider what shall befall us at our latter end! Let us, therefore, turn from the delusive paths of iniquity, and fly to him who hath said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." When Christ came to finish the times, and to erect on earth his spiritual kingdom, "he preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." When his kingdom was rising up among the nations, his servant the Apostle Paul, proclaimed in one of the principal cities of Greece, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent," Acts xvii. 30. To a less civilized people, he taught the same doctrine:—"We preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways," Acts xiv. 15, 16. Such a season is again visiting the nations. The God of the whole earth, by most wonderful dispensations of his providence, is now sending to them the words of eternal life, the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and other means of salvation. The times of that ignorance which he winked at, the times in which he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, are now coming to an end, and the merciful call is now addressed to them, that all men every where should repent, and turn from those

vanities unto the living God. Blessed shall all those be who comply with this call; but more dreadfully aggravated shall their condemnation be, who utterly reject it. Let Christians, therefore, be earnest at the throne of grace, praying that the nations, who are thus privileged, may receive from God saving faith in Jesus, and repentance unto life; and that he may speedily visit the other nations, with the same gospel privileges, and special grace. In such a time as this, the unbelief and impenitence of those, who have long enjoyed the gospel, must receive extraordinary aggravation. Since the Lord is sending his word and gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth, since he is calling many, who have not formerly enjoyed that call, to repent and believe the gospel, since some of them appear to comply with that call of Divine love and grace, since we profess to take an interest in it, and since many of us have contributed to carry on this great work, will it not greatly aggravate the iniquity of our unbelief and impenitence, if we ourselves have not truly repented and believed the gospel? Let it be our great concern, to repent of all our sins, and to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may escape the destruction of the wicked when it cometh, and may obtain the everlasting salvation of our souls.

3. A concern about the public prosperity of Christ's kingdom, is not inconsistent with the exercise of true godliness in the heart. The Saviour directs men's attention to those objects, which are of a public nature, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; and yet he requires the inward exercise of religion,—Repent ye and believe the gospel. The exercise of faith and repentance is, therefore, consistent with our attention to the fulfilling of the times of darkness, and with a zealous concern for the coming of Christ's kingdom. It is the same gracious principle which inclines believers to take an interest in the outward prosperity of religion, that influences them to the inward exercises of piety; the same Divine Spirit guides them to both, and the same holy word requires and regulates their duty about each of them. To suppose that those who profess a great concern about personal religion, and are careless about the advancement of Christ's kingdom are rightly performing their duty, is a great mistake; and to imagine that those who discover a zeal for the latter, are indifferent to the former, is very uncharitable. Feeble exertions in either of these are a great defect in Christian conduct; but eminence in both is the very

perfection of the Christian character. They have a mutual influence on one another. Strong desires and earnest endeavours that God's way may be known on the earth, and his saving health among all nations, will lead Christians to spiritual exercises, both about the means that are used to accomplish that end, and concerning their success. When the means are employed, Christians will pray for the blessing of God to make them successful; and when any success is granted, they will praise the Lord who giveth the increase. These are exercises by which their personal religion will be enlarged. The exercise of true godliness in the soul, will lead Christians to a concern for the glory of God, and for the salvation of men, and to do every thing in their power to promote those spiritual objects. Where is the believer, enjoying Divine consolations, and the blessings of salvation, who does not feel a desire that others may possess the same privileges? This desire is inseparable from the exercises and enjoyments of true religion; and, therefore, it must determine the subject of it to exert themselves in promoting the salvation of mankind. We must beware of substituting a zealous concern for promoting the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, in the room of personal religion; and also of satisfying ourselves with what we account practical piety, while we neglect every endeavour to advance the kingdom of grace in the world. Happy shall we be if we practise both, and if we experience the influence of one of them animating us to the diligent study of the other.

4. Our lot seems to have fallen in the most perilous and in the most encouraging time, that has ever passed over the church of Christ. There may have been some times more perilous, and others more encouraging; but few, or none them, have possessed both those qualities in a degree superior to the present time. The day of the church's low condition, and of antichristian darkness and persecution, has been more perilous, but not so encouraging. The apostolic period, when the church was guided by immediate inspiration, was filled with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, was privileged with miracles, was blessed with seasons of extraordinary conversion, and was favoured with times of singular refreshing from the presence of the Lord, was more encouraging, but not so perilous as ours. The time that is now passing over the church is in a high degree, both perilous and encouraging. The abounding

of sin against God, and the pouring of Divine judgments on men, render our time perilous. By them the world is filled with snares, and believers are exposed to temptation and danger. Existing under the third *wo*, and living in the world while the judgment is sitting, and the vials are pouring out, our time must be perilous indeed. Times are encouraging, when extraordinary exertions are made to disseminate the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ among men, by sending to them the word of God, and the preaching of the gospel. Times are encouraging, when most comfortable success is attending those blessed endeavours. Times are encouraging, when Christians understand by the books of inspired prophecy, that Satan's kingdom in the world is about to fall, and that Christ's kingdom, in its prosperous state, will be speedily introduced. Such are the characters of the times, in which we live; and, therefore, though they be perilous, they are also encouraging. Since our times are perilous, Christ's exhortation must be obeyed, if we would be safe, "watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Since our times are encouraging, let us comply with his call. "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." And since our time is both perilous and encouraging, let us join trembling with our mirth, and sing of mercy and of judgment. These mixed features in our time render Christ's exhortation peculiarly suitable to us,—Repent ye, and believe the gospel.

5. Without the exercise of faith and repentance, Christians will not be prepared either to bear their sufferings in the day of trial, or rightly to improve the church's triumphant deliverance. Though the millennial saints will enjoy an uninterrupted calm, those who live in the ages immediately before them, must pass through a violent storm. The great city Babylon is not yet thrown down; the judgment to consume and destroy it, is still sitting, and there have not yet completely passed over us the vials, nor the earthquake, which shall so terribly shake the nations, that men's hearts, that are not balanced with Divine grace, will fail them for fear, and for looking after the things that are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Without saving grace, supported in its exercise by the Holy Spirit, Christians, like Peter in the storm, will begin to sink, when they shall behold on the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. Those who are

strangers to faith and repentance, cannot have any solid comfort, when the Lord doeth this; and those who are not in the exercise of those graces, though they may possess them in the habit, will be deprived of sensible comfort. Christians, in this situation, though they have eyes, they will not clearly see the rock of their salvation; and though they have ears, they will not distinctly hear, with application to themselves, the voice of mercy, in the promises of support and deliverance.—Nor can they be prepared, in this frame, for the contemplation or enjoyment of the church's enlargement and prosperity. This may be enjoyed in the prospect of faith, in the solacing foretaste, or in the actual possession. Without a believing and penitent frame, what comfortable prospect can we take of the millennial sabbath that remaineth for the people of God? In this condition of soul, what foretaste of that blessed state can we enjoy? Were we to live till the millennial glory appear, and to continue in an unbelieving and impenitent frame, we could not properly relish the precious enjoyment. If unbelief and hardness of heart prevail in us, darkness, doubts and fears, both about our own state, and the church's deliverance, will take such hold of our minds as will fill us with hurtful fears, instead of joyful anticipations, or the assured hope of promised good.—In this frame of mind, we will be like the heath in the desert, and will not see when good cometh. O then, let us be diligent in the use of the means of grace, that we may receive from God faith and repentance; and that, under the influence of his Spirit, they may grow and flourish in our souls.

6. By the exercise of faith and repentance, we will be prepared both for Divine judgments when they shall be poured out, and for the church's joyful prosperity. Though all believers are freed from the curse in every trouble, have the sanctified benefit of those afflictions secured to them, and will be supported under them all; yet those believers only, who are walking by faith in a penitent frame, can apply to themselves this comfort. To a believing and penitent soul, no calamity can be truly overwhelming. When the judgment shall sit, the saints, in those exercises, will be assured, that the sentence will be pronounced, neither against them, nor the church of God. When the vials are poured out, the exercised Christian will be persuaded, that they are designed for the inhabitants of the symbolical earth, and that the symbolical heavens, in which they dwell, shall be safe. When the voices shall be heard, the thunders

roar, and the lightnings flash, the believer can rejoice in the faith of the church's preservation and deliverance. When the earthquake shall shake to pieces, and sink into destruction the Redeemer's enemies, the believer's hope is unshaken, and his refuge shall not be moved. He knows that the judgments which shall divide into parts the antichristian kingdom shall unite the fearers of God; and that the convulsions which shall overturn the cities of the nations, shall establish the city of the Lord. The penitent and believing soul will be persuaded, that when the great hail, the plague of which is exceeding great, shall fall on its devoted objects, there shall no evil befall the church, neither shall any hurtful plague come near the dwellings of the saints.—In the exercise of faith and repentance, we will also be prepared for the church's salvation. By this holy frame our loins will be girded, and our lights burning, and we will be like to men who wait for their Lord. We will be enabled to appreciate duly this glorious deliverance, and to observe with joy the signs of its approach. Concerning every dispensation of his hand for bringing down his enemies, and every operation of his grace for advancing his church, the exercise of those principles in our hearts will enable us to say; "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." As the exercise of grace makes believers ready for communion with God in his ordinances, and for their latter end; so it will make them meet for the church's promised glory, in this world. The nature of it, they will understand; its reality, they will believe; its coming, they will expect; and for the enjoyment of it, they will have some comfortable preparation.

7. It ought to be the Christian's great concern, by the exercise of all ~~grace~~ grace, and by the performance of every duty, to obtain preparation for that season, when the times shall be fulfilled, and when the kingdom of God shall come.—For illustrating this, I may direct your attention to two portions of scripture; the former of which relates to that change, to which our text did primarily refer: and the latter belongs to that promised and expected alteration, to which our text has been accommodated. The former contains a part of the Angel's words to Zacharias, concerning his son, John the Baptist. "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," Luke i. 17. It was the design of John's ministry to prepare a people for the manifesta-

tion of Christ among them, for the abolition of the Mosaic system, and for the erection of the New-testament church. For this purpose, he taught the people the doctrine of repentance, and called them to believe in him, who was immediately to be revealed. The existence and exercise of the same graces in the souls of men, are necessary to prepare them for the fulfilling of the times, and for the coming of the millennial kingdom. The ministry of the gospel should now be so conducted, that it may be a mean, in the hand of the Spirit, for making ready a people prepared for the Lord. The doctrines of faith in Jesus Christ, and of repentance unto life, must now be preached, for making ready a people prepared for the millennial church. Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, must be testified to Christians and Jews, to Mahometans and Pagans; that many of them may be prepared to compose the innumerable company, to enjoy the millennial glory, and to celebrate her triumphant song. With this view should ministers preach those precious doctrines, and with this view should mankind hear, believe and obey them, that they may be made ready as a people prepared for the Lord.—The other text of scripture to which I must now direct your attention, has a reference to the church's approaching deliverance. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," Rev. xix. 7. The words I have in view are these,—His wife hath made herself ready. To show that this preparation is not of herself, it is added, ver. 8, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." The careful use of the means on our part, and the Divine blessing attending them on his part, will make the saints ready even for the marriage supper of the Lamb. In a believing and humble dependence on the God of all grace, on the Spirit of grace, and on Him who is full of grace and truth, persevere, O Christians, in the use of the means, endeavouring to exercise grace, and to walk circumspectly, so shall ye be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. There is a preparation for ordinances and for death. This preparation, both in state and frame, we all need. It is by the exercise of faith and repentance, through the blessing of Christ and the working of the Spirit, that we can obtain it. If we have this preparation, we will be made ready for every revival, which God may give to the church,

while we are continued in it. Be concerned that others may be made ready. Pray that the means which God hath sent to Jew and Gentile, to the Barbarian, the Scythian, the bond and the free, may be continued, enlarged, and rendered effectual, for making multitudes ready for the millennial church, and for the marriage supper of the Lamb. As the preparation of the heart is from the Lord, pray ye to him, that by means of the word and ordinances, the love of God may be manifested, the grace of Christ may be communicated, and the Spirit may be poured out from on high, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, that the bride, the Lamb's wife, may make herself ready.

8. And to conclude—You have heard of some of the times that will be fulfilled when Antichrist shall fall, and when the church shall enter into her millennial state. Endeavour to understand the nature of them. Lament over them, as they dishonour God, oppose the Mediator's kingdom, and hurt the church's purity and peace. Be grieved for those disorders and sufferings which their continuance produce among men. Pray for their removal. Observe every providential occurrence, which tends to bring them to an end. Wait with patience, in faith and hope, for that happy time when they shall be fulfilled, and taken out of the way.

You have also heard of some parts of the church's blessedness, in her millennial state. Carefully consider and meditate upon them, and beware of disregarding or despising those glorious things. Endeavour to satisfy yourselves concerning the import of those Divine promises and predictions, which warrant our expectation of such an happy time. Send up supplications daily, to him who heareth prayer, that he may hasten that blessed day. Endeavour to live in the faith, to imbibe the spirit, and to enjoy the foretaste of that season of Christian felicity.

You have also heard of some of the signs, by which you may know that this blessed summer is near. Meditate on every one of them, consider their tendency, and investigate their truth. Pray for their continuance, their increase, and their perfection. Do what you can to support the means which are now employed to enlighten mankind. Consider those providential and spiritual operations, by which Christ maintains, increases, and renders effectual the means of gathering the nations to himself. Christ and Antichrist seem now to have taken the field, the former to accomplish, and the latter

to prevent, the illumination of the world, the conversion of the Jews, and the revival and purification of Christian churches. Watch ye the progress of this conflict. Be ye on the Lord's side. Wo shall be to them who are against him. A curse shall come on them who are neutral; "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

You have also heard some remarks concerning the prophetic numbers, which state the time when all these things shall be fulfilled. On several things belonging to them we cannot speak with certainty. The most that can be done, relative to these, is only to give an opinion. The day will particularly declare it. The church must wait and watch, believe and hope, pray and be active, that nothing may be wanting on her part, for promoting this work of the Lord. Searching into those numbers, since God has revealed them, is certainly the Christian's duty; but, till the predicted events are accomplished, they will not be circumstantially known; known in the specific nature or kind of some of them, in the direct way in which they will come to pass, in the precise time at which some of them shall be accomplished, in the particular places which will be the scene of their operation, in the persons who will be principally employed, and in the objects who will be the chief sufferers. Since those numbers are mentioned, we may be assured that the duration of the system of darkness is limited, and that the system itself shall perish at the appointed time. From comparing those numbers with one another, and with Divine providences, there is ground to hope, that the following generation will not pass away, till all those things shall be fulfilled.

You have likewise heard of the Christian's duty, at the present time; Repent ye, and believe the gospel. As the principles of faith and repentance in the heart, are at all times necessary to make us Christians indeed, and the exercise of them in our spiritual frame is needful to make us in every situation, holy and comforted saints; so their being and actings are peculiarly requisite to prepare us for the Lord's coming to enlarge and establish his kingdom in the earth. Seek from God, therefore, saving faith and true repentance. To all those who have not obtained them, Jesus is saying, Repent ye, and believe the gospel. *These are spiritual principles, which, by our own power, we cannot acquire, and religious exercises, which,

of ourselves we cannot attain; but they are principles which we must acquire, and exercises to which we must attain, otherwise we shall perish for ever. The Divine injunction in the command is accompanied with a revelation of grace in the promise; and it is by the accomplishment of the latter, that any sinner is enabled to comply with the former. The Holy Spirit, who quickeneth those that are dead in trespasses and sins, is graciously promised; "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them;" ye shall repent and believe the gospel, Ezek. xxxiv. 27. O that sinners would consider these things, and cry for the Spirit to enable them to obey the gospel call! O that they would apply the precepts of the holy law to their own hearts and lives, and that the Spirit would convince them of the number, the heinous nature, and manifold aggravations of their transgressions! O that they would apply to their own consciences, the threatenings of the broken law, and that the Spirit would convince them of their misery, of their condemnation, and of that everlasting punishment to which they are exposed! O that they were constrained to cry out, What shall we do to be saved from our sins, and from the wrath to come! O that they would turn their attention to the glorious gospel which reveals what Christ has done and suffered to expiate their sins, and to purchase for them eternal life. O that they would meditate on the promises, on the covenant of grace, on Christ the Mediator of that covenant, and on the Divine warrant that they have to believe in him, that they may be saved! In this way, they shall obtain the Holy Spirit to implant in their hearts the principle of saving grace, that they may repent and believe the gospel. To all those who are true believers and real penitents, Jesus is also saying, Repent ye, and believe the gospel. By the grace of God, they enjoy this blessed principle; how hurtful then, is it to themselves, and how dishonouring to their God and Saviour, if they live without the daily exercise of faith and repentance? All the saints are possessed of that high dignity, which is contained in those words:—"For the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you," 1 Pet. iv. 14. Let them, therefore, live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, that they may abound in the exercise of faith and repentance. Seek grace from above, by which you will be enabled to live in a believing and penitent frame, all the days of your life. Be diligent in the performance of all the duties of religion, that your faith and

repentance may be exercised and increased. Looking for the fulfilling of the time, and for the coming of the kingdom of God, let us all remember and obey Christ's command, " Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."

THE END OF THE INQUIRY.

APPENDIX

TO AN

INQUIRY

THE PROPHETIC NUMBERS CONTAINED IN THE 1335 DAYS;
OCCASIONED BY A PAPER IN THE EDINBURGH CHRISTIAN IN-
STRUCTOR, FOR MARCH, 1818, ON PROPHETIC CHRONOLOGY.

NEAR the end of March last, I published five Discourses, containing an Inquiry into the times that shall be fulfilled at Antichrist's fall—The Church's blessedness in her millennial rest—The signs that this happy season is at hand—The prophetic numbers contained in the 1335 days—And the Christian's duty at this interesting crisis. A few days before their publication, a very accurate and ingenious Paper appeared in the Edinburgh Christian Instructor, on prophetic chronology. In turning our attention to this paper, no hostility is intended to that able, useful, and well-conducted, periodical publication in which this paper has appeared. To all who are employed in that work, I ardently wish the greatest success, in propagating by it, wherever it goes, the knowledge of evangelical truth. This paper was preceded by another, containing eleven observations on the prophetic style. These are wisely conceived, accurately arranged, and illustrated with judgment. It has been followed by another, which contains part of an Analysis of the book of Revelation. It is not to the first or the last of those papers, nor even to the second, but in so far as it fixes the numbers in the prophecy, to which I mean to state any objections. In doing so, I disclaim every design of opposing any judicious and evangelical writer, as the Author of those papers appears to be; my only intention is more largely to unfold the views which I have been constrained to entertain concerning the prophetic numbers of Daniel and John.

As the time which this writer fixes for the rise and fall of Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, and the commencement of the millennium, are different from the periods mentioned for those events, in my fourth discourse; it appeared necessary to publish an Appendix to that discourse, stating more particularly our objections to the supposition of Antichrist's rise in 756, and offering more explicitly our reasons for the opinion that he came into existence in 533, and that he was confirmed in his seat in 606. The dates of the Jews' conversion, and the millennium's commencement, with some of his sentiments, on collateral objects, may also be considered.

The view which this accomplished writer suggests of those dates is the following:—He concludes that John received his revelations in A. D. 90. By adding to this number 666 years, the number of the beast, Rev. xiii. 18, we have 756, when the Pope became a temporal prince. He considers this year as the date of Antichrist's rise. The 1260 days during which he is to reign, he, like some other writers, considers to be prophetic years, which being reduced to civil years, make 1242. This number being added to 756, makes 1998. In this year, he supposes the last persecution of the church in Europe shall cease, the temporal power of the Pope will fall, and the Ottoman empire will be dissolved. The Jews will be converted in 2028. They shall remain under discipline 40 years, till 2068. Four or five years are then allowed for the battle of Armageddon, the binding of Satan, and the establishment of peace in the world. The millennium will then commence in the year 2072. This is the scheme on which we shall make a few remarks.

When the writer of this paper proceeds, "to consult the chronology, relative to Antichrist, and the church of Christ," he begins by saying, "We conclude, that the Book of Revelation was given to John, A. D. 90. Add to this 666, the number of the beast, and you have 756." On what grounds the Author was led to this conclusion, he does not here inform us; but we know that some writers have been obliged to use considerable pains to come at this conclusion, and also for the same end. It is, however, at variance with the ancient record of ecclesiastic history, with the accounts of more modern historians of the church, and with the statements of commentators. Eusebius, who wrote his History in

the fourth century, fixes this date in A. D. 97. Dr. Mosheim fixes the commencement of that persecution, in which John was banished to Patmos, in A. D. 93 or 94. Mr. Brown, late of Haddington, is of opinion that John was banished to Patmos in A. D. 95. Mr. Newton, late of London, in his history of the first century of Christianity, fixes on A. D. 94, for the beginning of that persecution. The statements of commentators are equally hostile to that conclusion. Mr. Durham adopts the date mentioned by Eusebius. The Continuator of Mr. Poole thinks that John received his Revelations in A. D. 94 and 95. Mr. Lowman fixes this date at 95. Dr. Gill states it at 95 or 96. Dr. Guyse says, that the Revelation is most commonly thought to have been written about the year of our Lord, 96 or 97. Dr. Doddridge thinks, that if the ancient records are to be credited, the date of this book may be fixed about the year 96. From these authorities, which might easily be increased, we are warranted in declaring the date which is assumed in this paper to be entirely uncertain, if not completely incorrect. On that account, the calculations which are connected with it, so far as they derive probability of truth from that connexion, must be fictitious and unsatisfactory. There are not 666 years from the time, in which John received his revelations, to the date of the Pope's temporal power; and, therefore, if this "is the epoch from which other calculations shall be computed," uncertainty must attach to them all.

I do not object to the application of the number 666, as it describes a period of years, at the expiration of which, Antichrist should be revealed. Of this number, there are two scriptural descriptions, to which we should attend. It is represented as "the number of the beast," Rev. xiii. 18. And it is expressed as "the number of his name," Rev. xiii. 17—xv. 2. The latter of those descriptions of this number, "the number of his name," warrants the common use to which it has been applied, in proving the church of Rome to be the grand apostacy, and her Popes to be the great Antichrist, by finding the numeral letters in her name amount to 666. The former description of this number, "the number of the beast," authorizes the application of it, as a statement of a number of years. To direct and encourage us to count the number of the beast; it is added, "For it is the number of a man." It is not the number of a Prophet, but it is the number of a man. Its duration

must be calculated by the ordinary rules for computing time among men; and not by those methods that are used for fixing the continuance of prophetic numbers. This number must signify 666 years, and as it is applied to the beast, it is the number of the beast's years. It signifies the number of the years in which the Roman power should exist, as the fourth beast in Daniel's vision. When the Roman government should be 666 years old, in the character of the fourth beast which Daniel saw, the Roman ecclesiastic beast should rise up in the church. The first and the second beasts which were presented to Daniel, in his prophetic vision, the Babylonian and Medo-Persian powers, were Asiatic governments. The third and fourth beasts, in his vision, the Grecian and Roman powers, were originally European dynasties. The first beast, or the Babylonian monarchy, was in its full vigour, and at the height of its power, when Daniel saw the vision. When the Medes and Persians began their attack upon the Empire of Babylon, the second beast of Daniel appeared. When the Grecian armies, under the command of Alexander, the notable horn between the eyes of the he-goat, crossed over into Asia, and began their rapid and successful conquest of the Persian Empire, Daniel's third beast arose, and began to operate on the scene of prophecy. When the Roman power first got possessions in Asia, and commenced their more slow and difficult, but equally successful conquest of the nations of the east, then the fourth beast in Daniel's vision made its appearance, and Rome entered on the scene of prophecy. This happened in the year in which Attalus, king of Pergamus died. By his testament, he bequeathed his effects to the Roman Senate, and they instantly claimed his kingdom as their own, sent an army to take possession of it, subdued it under their power, and reduced it into a Roman province. The greater part of Asia the less, was contained in this kingdom, by the government of which the Romans became an Asiatic power, and commenced their destructive operations, as the fourth beast that Daniel saw. Attalus, king of Pergamus died, and the Romans claimed that kingdom as its rightful sovereign, in the 133d* year before Christ. If we add to this number, 533 years, our first date for Antichrist's rise, we have exactly 666 years. The Roman power was 666 years old,

In the prophetic character of the fourth beast of Daniel's vision, when the Bishop of Rome, by Justinian's decree, was constituted the head of all the churches, when the little horn sprang up among his ten horns, and that beast rose up out of the earth, which had two horns like a lamb, and which spake as a dragon.

If we attend to the time at which the Roman power was completely established in the east, and all their enemies were first subdued before them, we will find another remarkable epoch in their history. In the 61st year before Christ, Pompey having returned to Rome from his victorious conquests in the east, obtained a triumph in that city for his great services, and wonderful success. In the 60th year before Christ, the Romans having seen their empire extended and established in Asia, Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Cæsar entered into a confederacy for supporting each other in their pretensions in the Roman state, engrossed the whole power of it into their hands, and divided it among themselves.* This laid the foundation of those destructive civil wars, which soon terminated in the dissolution of the Roman republic, and in the erection of the Roman monarchy. If we add to the 60 years before Christ; 606 years, our second date for antichrist's rise, when he triumphed over all his rivals, we will again have 666 years, the number of the beast. By either of these calculations, especially the former, or by both taken together, we have a much more satisfactory explanation of the number of the beast, than by that representation which is given in this paper, both from the nature of the things themselves, and the certainty of the dates. Since it is undeniably evident, that 666 years intervened, from the time when the Roman state began to act as the fourth beast in Daniel's prophecy, till the time when the Emperor Justinian constituted the Bishop of Rome the head of all the churches; and since there are also 666 years between the time when the Romans triumphed over their enemies in Asia, and the time when the Pope, by the decree of Phocas, silenced his rivals, and consolidated his ecclesiastic supremacy, there must be good reason to conclude, that, in these transactions, the words of John were fulfilled:—"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six."

* Falcæus, Cor. vol. IV. p. 81.

When the Author speaks of the time when Antichrist rose, after mentioning some of the dates which expositors have fixed for it, he says: "We are, however, inclined to the opinion of those who date the rise of Antichrist from A. D. 756, when Pepin, king of France, raised Pope Stephen II. to the rank of a temporal prince; for it is in that character that the head of the Roman hierarchy may be considered as the beast." Blame should be imputed to no man, for being inclined to the opinion of those, who date the rise of Antichrist from 756, though our opinion may be different; and we may believe and hope he is mistaken; but it is not so easy to pass over the reason he assigns for it: "For it is in that character that the head of the Roman hierarchy may be considered as the beast." In opposition to this, I am still of opinion, that the Pope's possession of temporal power is not essential to his scriptural character, as the Man of sin, the Antichrist, and the False prophet; and, therefore, there is no valid reason for considering the 756th year of the Christian era, as the date of his rise. In that capacity, in which inspired predictions describe Antichrist's characters and actions to him, in that same capacity, must the prophetic numbers be applied, for fixing the time of his rise and fall. It must be unreasonable to suppose, that the prophecies should delineate his characters and deportment, under one denomination of him, and that the numbers, which are contained in the same prophecies, should measure his duration under another denomination of him. In order to ascertain the precise idea, in which the numbers in prophecy exhibit the beginning and ending of this Antichristian beast, we shall now take a view of the descriptions which are given of this object, in those predictions,

As the Man of sin, he is described by the apostle Paul; 2 Thes. ii. 4:—"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." On account of their office, emperors, kings, and temporal princes are called gods, and are entitled to honour from men. In the fulfilment of this prediction, the head of the Roman hierarchy has assumed sovereign authority over them, and has claimed, and sometimes exercised a power to excommunicate and dethrone them, and to absolve their subjects from their allegiance to them. Did he arrogate and exert this power in his civil, or in his ecclesiastic capacity? Certainly not as the temporal potentate of

Rome, but as the vicar of Christ, and as the supreme head of the church on earth. The apostle adds, "so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." These words represent his blasphemous conduct, relative to the Great Jehovah. In the apostate church, he has set himself as God, and as being above God, by dispensing with Divine laws, by commanding the worship of creatures and images, in opposition to that law, by making the meaning and obligation of the Divine word depend on his authority, and by placing himself on the throne of God in the church below, in giving laws to it, appointing ordinances in it, exercising unlimited power over it, and receiving blasphemous titles and worship from its members. Whether do these things apply to him in his civil, or in his ecclesiastic capacity? As he is raised to the rank of a temporal prince, he has no connexion with any one of them; but as he is the spiritual and supreme head of the church, every one of them belongs to him. Whether was it his coming as a temporal prince, or as the blasphemous head of the apostate church, that Paul describes in these affecting words, ver. 9, 10; "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved?" Whether was it by his temporal or spiritual authority, that the head of the Roman hierarchy forbade to marry, and commanded to abstain from meats? These questions must be answered in the same way, that those things belong to him, and are performed by him, as the head of the church in his ecclesiastic capacity. The prophetic numbers must also determine his duration, in the same capacity.

The apostle John, in his first epistle, describes this head of the Roman hierarchy, several times by the name of Antichrist:—"Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time," chap. ii. 18. This emphatic designation represents him as the peculiar enemy and opposer of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By opposing all the Redeemer's offices, the Pope of Rome carries on a wicked opposition, to the one Mediator between God and man. He states himself as an enemy to Jesus, in his prophetic office, by corrupting the Divine word, by denying the doctrines which it reveals, by propagating those errors which it

condemns, and by withholding from the people that word, concerning which Jesus says to all who profess his name; "Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." He is the enemy of Jesus in his priestly office, by maintaining the merit of good works, by the blasphemous sacrifice of the mass, and by employing and depending upon the intercession of saints and angels, as well as on the intercession of the Great Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous. In Christ's kingly office, he also opposes our Redeemer, by suspending his laws, altering the form of worship, the office-bearers, and the administrations that he hath appointed, and by claiming and exercising that absolute power over the church, which belongs to him who hath said, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me." In all this opposition to Christ, whether do we recognize the head of the Roman hierarchy in his temporal, or spiritual capacity? As a temporal prince, he is incapable of it; but it is congenial and essential to him as vested with his spiritual supremacy. The numbers in prophecy must be applied to him in his ecclesiastic, which is his antichristian, character.

In the Revelation of John, there are many things said of this object, by the consideration of which we shall be brought to the same conclusion. The things contained in chap. xvii. only are to be considered:—"So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit on a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns," ver. 3. The Roman Pope is here exhibited as a woman, which cannot symbolize him as a temporal prince, but is a most appropriate symbol of him, as the head of the apostate church. The same thing is evident from the inscription on her forehead:—"And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth," ver. 5. What mystery is found about him as a temporal prince? Is not this attached to him only in his ecclesiastic character and government? What resemblance is there between the Pope's temporal power, and the extensive sway of the rulers of ancient Babylon? None at all. But there is a very striking likeness in the Pope's spiritual supremacy over all popish christendom, to the universal dominion of the Babylonian monarchs. Was the Pope the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth, as a temporal prince? Was this the

effect of his temporal rule over his small state in Italy? This is impossible. It was as the corrupt and blasphemous head of an apostate and adulterous church, that every species of profanity went forth from him throughout all the earth. John saw this "woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," ver. 6. It was not by the exercise of his temporal power, which was very limited, but by the influence of his spiritual supremacy over the kings of the earth, that the head of the antichristian church stirred up cruel, bloody, and exterminating wars against the saints; and excited persecution unto death, and execrable, faithless, and indiscriminate massacres against the martyrs of Jesus. "And when I saw her," says John, "I wondered with great admiration." What objects of wonder and great admiration could John see in the head of the Roman hierarchy, as a temporal prince, who reigned over a small part of Italy? But if we consider him in his characters and actions as the blasphemous rival of Christ, the enemy to the doctrines and ordinances of the Christian religion, the persecuting foe of the saints, and as the monstrous head of the antichristian apostacy, all of which belong to him in his ecclesiastic capacity, we will see a terrific and extraordinary figure, which was better calculated to produce wonder and great admiration in such a mind as John's, than any other earthly object, that was ever presented to the observation of man.

In this vision, the subjection of the rulers and the people, on the Roman earth, to this antichristian beast, constitutes two other particulars, which will establish the same truth. Concerning the subjection of the rulers to this beast, John declares, ver. 3, "I saw a woman sit on a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The angel said to John, ver. 7, "I will show thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath seven heads and ten horns." It is afterwards said in explanation, ver. 12, 13,—"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings—These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." The beast that carrieth the woman is the same with that beast that was to continue 42 months, Rev. xiii. 5. It does not signify the Pope's temporal power; but it represents the whole secular power which should exist in that part of the ancient Roman empire, to which the Pope's spiritual jurisdiction extended. The secular Roman beast,

having existed 666 years, from the time at which it began its operations as the fourth beast in Daniel's vision, did then identify itself with the antichristian power, and voluntarily became the beast that carrieth the mother of harlots. As the prophecy informs us that they shall perish together, Rev. xix. 20; so the duration of the secular power in the Roman empire, in its new character and connexion, must be the same with the time in which the woman who sits on it must exist. As a rider has the direction of the beast that carries him, and as its power and strength are exerted for his benefit; so the secular power in the Roman empire, existing either in the secular beast or in the ten horns, has been subjected to the Roman Antichrist, and exercised for his support and aggrandizement. Did these kings subject themselves to the Pope as a temporal prince? Was it not to him, as the pretended vicegerent of Christ; that they yielded obedience? Did the Pope rest his claim to subjection to himself from the kings of the earth, on his temporal dominion over them? Did he not rest it entirely on his spiritual supremacy over them? It must be perfectly evident that the kings of the earth were subject to the Pope, not as the man who sat on the throne of the Cesars; but as the dignified Ecclesiastic who occupied the chair of St. Peter.—The inhabitants of the Roman earth, as well as its rulers, have also yielded subjection to the Pope of Rome. "Come hither," says the Angel to John, ver. 1, "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters." This symbol is explained, ver. 15, "And he said unto me, the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." This prediction assures us, that multitudes of people, belonging to various nations, and speaking different languages, should submit to the power of the antichristian beast; and we all know that this prophecy has been fully accomplished. In what character were they obedient to his will? Was it in his civil character as a temporal prince? By no means. This kind of subjection to him is peculiar to the few miserable inhabitants of the small state, over which his temporal power is exercised. It is to him, in his antichristian character as the head of the church, that the peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, are subjected.

The characters and operations of this beast, as delineated in ap-

phesy, apply to him in his spiritual, or ecclesiastic capacity; but, from his temporal power, it does not appear that he is at all described, in those visions of God. His temporal power must, therefore, be adventitious, and not essential to him as the beast of Rome. What concern can his possession of a small part of Italy, or his temporal power over it, have with his essential and comprehensive characters, as the Man of sin sitting in the temple of God, as the Antichrist who is the principal enemy of Jesus, and as the False prophet who has deceived the nations? The Pope's enjoyment of his small territory, part of which has been called St. Peter's Patrimony, is not more essential to his establishment as the head of the Roman hierarchy, and of the antichristian church, than the actual possession of the glebe-land, which is bestowed on some gospel ministers, is necessary to constitute their pastoral relation to the people of their ministerial charge. In this opinion we are the more confirmed, because, after the Pope's elevation to temporal power, many of his bishops, from motives of policy or superstition, were constituted temporal princes. We may now ask, How shall we distinguish between the Roman beast, and the secular bishops? Not by his possessing temporal power, for this belonged to them as well as to him; but it is in his spiritual supremacy, and antichristian headship over the church, by which he is distinguished from them, and from every other man in the world. It is, therefore, in that character that the Pope of Rome, may, and ought to be considered as the beast.

It has also been insinuated, that the Pope's temporal power is essential to him as the Antichrist, because, in the visions of Daniel, he receives the denomination of an horn. If we attend to Daniel's account of this horn, we will find it to be very different from the rest. To this horn are ascribed peculiar properties, which correspond not to the temporal, but to the ecclesiastic character and conduct of the Pope. Of him the prophet says, "And, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things," Dan. vii. 8. The words of the Prophet are of the same import with those of the Apostle:—"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon," Rev. xiii. 11. In these two verses, the Pope of Rome is described by three most significant tokens:—"In this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man." These eyes import that this horn should possess wisdom, knowledge, discernment, and counsel in a

degree superior to the other horns. When these things belong to an unprincipled and immoral power, they enable it, by exercising cunning, deceit, dissimulation, and falsehood, more effectually to accomplish its designs. In every age, this has been notoriously fulfilled, in the conduct of the Pope of Rome, and his council, acting in their ecclesiastic capacity; but, in their temporal rule, they have never evidenced, that they were possessed of the eyes of a man. This beast "had two horns like a lamb." Claiming a relation to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, he pretended to meekness, humility, innocence, and purity; while he was more cruel, proud, injurious, and polluted, than any of the horns of the beast. This description cannot be applied to him with so much propriety in his temporal rule, as it accords with him in his spiritual characters and administrations. He is represented also, as speaking great things, and speaking like a dragon. In him as a temporal prince this prediction cannot be verified; but, in his ecclesiastic character, it has received an exact accomplishment. By his blasphemous decrees, edicts, bulls, anathemas, excommunications, and commands as St. Peter's successor, and Christ's vicar, he hath spoken great things against God, against Christ, against gospel doctrines and ordinances, against the true church, and her members, against his own vassals when they dared to dispute his will, and against the temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare of men. In him, therefore, as an ecclesiastic head, exercising a spiritual supremacy over emperors, kings, princes, ecclesiastics, and the laity, all those representations are most minutely fulfilled.

From all these considerations, we are forced to conclude, that it is not in his temporal power, but in his spiritual jurisdiction and operations, that the Roman beast is the object of prophecy—that his temporal power is not essential to his scriptural characters, as the Man of sin, the Antichrist, or the False prophet—that it is not in the character of a temporal prince that he may be considered as the beast—that his rise should be dated from the time in which he, being constituted the head of all the churches as God, took his seat in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God—and that the year 756 cannot be the date of Antichrist's rise. In his anti-christian character, which is his true one, the world had seen him more than 200 years before that period. From the days of Justinian, they had seen him, in 539, constituted, by an imperial decree,

the head of all the churches. During the reign of Phocas they had seen, in 608, his antichristian headship over the church recognised and solemnly established by another imperial decree. They had seen him, during all this period, grasping at this power, and actually exercising it, by sending out swarms of monks, like locusts out of the bottomless pit, to convert, as he called it, the nations to Christianity; by investing the leader of those who were sent to Britain, with power over all the British bishops, and Saxon prelates, constituting him the first archbishop of Canterbury; by conferring similar dignities on others whom he sent to other countries; by encouraging and employing the different orders of monks, as his most faithful auxiliaries, in extending his power over the rulers of the church; by maintaining and propagating the doctrines concerning the worship of saints and images, the purifying fire of purgatory, the necessity of observing human rites and institutions in order to obtain salvation, and the efficacy of reliques for curing the diseases of soul and body; by adding continually new ceremonies to the ordinances of worship, changing the Lord's supper into the sacrifice of the mass, appointing litanies, or prayers; to be said to the saints, and erecting temples, and instituting public religious festivals to their honour; by pleading for the authority of the church, claiming it to himself, and pretending to work miracles; by resisting the edicts of emperors, and condemning the decrees of councils; by excommunicating emperors, and liberating their subjects from obedience to them; and by encouraging appeals to his tribunal, deciding in them by his own authority, and punishing, as far as he could, those who refused to submit to his sentence. Since all those things, and many more, were done by the Bishop of Rome, long before he became a temporal prince, we are warranted to conclude, that the foundation of his beastly power and blasphemous supremacy, was laid by the decree of Justinian, and that the ghostly fabric was finished by that of Phocas.

The observations that are contained in this paper concerning "the chronology of numbers and the chronology of events," are very judicious. But, alas! while men are as ready to err in applying "the eventful chronology," as they are in calculating "the numerical chronology," no infallibility can attach to our speculations in any "path." It is necessary, therefore, to consider the reasons he assigns, for fixing the other numbers.

Concerning the Jews' conversion, he says, "We conclude that the

Jews shall be converted, A. D. 2028." His proof of this is the following:—"Our Lord said; 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' And Paul said; 'Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in,' Luke xxi. 24. Rom. xi. 25, 30—33. The Jews, from the call of Abraham until their unbelief during our Lord's ministry, enjoyed the benefits of revealed religion, to the exclusion of the Gentiles, for 2000 years. As the common era is four years latter than his nativity, their unbelief may be dated from the 28th year of his age, according to the common era; adding these to the 2000, it makes 2028, when the equity of the Divine government between them and the Gentiles shall be balanced, and when they shall be converted." In a note he also says:—"Until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled, that is, until the Gentiles shall possess Jerusalem as long as did the Jews; or, until Christianity should be enjoyed by the Gentiles, as long as the benefits of Divine revelation were enjoyed by the Jews, prior to the incarnation, which was about 2000 years; and in this last sense the contrast is stated by Paul, (Rom. xi. 25—30,) and to his conclusion we ought to accede."

In the first sense, the contrast will not hold; because from the days of Joshua the son of Nun, till the days of Titus the son of Vespasian, the Jews possessed Jerusalem, including the time of their captivity in Babylon, only about 1520 years; and by his own showing, "the Romans, Saracens, and Turks, have, in succession, possessed it for nearly 1800 years."

The whole of this statement may be invalidated on two grounds; the arbitrary and uncertain manner, in which the dates are fixed—and the entire silence both of our Lord and Paul, concerning the duration of the times of the Gentiles, or of the length of the time, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

The date assigned for the commencement of this period, at the call of Abraham, is very unsatisfactory. May it not, with more propriety, be supposed, that the time when the Jews began to enjoy the benefits of Divine revelation, to the exclusion of the Gentiles, should be fixed from the date of their complete organization as a church, at the giving of the law, and at the erection of the tabernacle among them, in the second year after they came out of the land of Egypt; or, from the era of their peaceful settlement in the promised land, a few years after they had passed over Jordan. We

cannot consider them, as a people, in the possession of the benefits of Divine revelation, or placed under their peculiar economy, till the former or the latter of those periods. Besides, we must not conclude, that the Jews, from the call of Abraham, enjoyed the benefits of revealed religion, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. The saving knowledge of God and his worship, by traditional revelation, in the light of which the saints, during the patriarchal ages, were guided in the ways of faith and holiness, was not at that time removed from the Gentile nations. Of this truth, the knowledge and piety of Melchisedec, Jethro, Job, his three friends, and Elishu, are most satisfactory demonstrations.

As the date which is mentioned for the commencement of this period is uncertain; so also is the time which is assigned for its termination. The date of the Jews' unbelief, or their rejection of Christ and his gospel, is arbitrarily assumed and improperly fixed. It does not appear that the compassionate Redeemer considered the Jews as fixed in their unbelief at his death; when he, after his resurrection, said to his apostles, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Immediately before his ascension, he again declared to them, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts i. 8. Though the fixing of this date is of no avail, in calculating the time of the Jews' conversion; yet it may be affirmed, that the time of the burning of their city and temple, of the miserable destruction of many of themselves, and of their banishment from their own land, is the more eligible date of the two. We have, therefore, abundant cause to conclude, that those calculations and conclusions, to the support of which, such uncertain dates as these are essential, must be a visionary fabric.

But the uncertainty of the dates of this season is not our only, nor indeed our principal objection to this scheme of calculation. We are obliged also to deny that either our Lord or his apostle says one word, in the texts quoted, concerning the duration, either of the Jews enjoying the benefits of revealed religion, to the exclusion of the Gentiles, or of the Gentiles enjoying the gospel, to the

exclusion of the Jews. In Luke xxi. 24, our Saviour predicts the uncommon slaughter of the Jews by the edge of the sword, and the total dispersion of the remainder of them into all nations; adding, "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." In these words, our Lord utters a plain and singular prediction, which has been accomplished for about 1750 years:—That idolatrous and unbelieving Gentiles should occupy Jerusalem, and possess the land of Canaan, until the times, in which the Christian and enlightened Gentiles should enjoy the gospel exclusively, shall be fulfilled. Not one hint is given concerning the duration of those times. To assert, therefore, that they shall be of the same duration with the time, in which the Jews enjoyed their peculiar privileges, is without any authority from the words of Christ. Nor does Paul, in Rom. xi. 25—30, say any thing concerning the duration of this time. He compares the holy and sovereign procedure of God with the Jews and Gentiles, in the nature of his dispensations to them both; but says nothing concerning the continuance either of the one or the other. Let the reader examine this important prediction, and judge for himself; if this is the conclusion of the apostle, in those verses, "that Christianity shall be enjoyed by the Gentiles exclusively, as long as the benefits of Divine revelation were enjoyed by the Jews, prior to the incarnation, which was about 2000 years." For my part, I cannot find in it any such thing. Instead, therefore, of feeling any obligation to accede to it, as an apostolic conclusion, there is sufficient cause to reject it, as an invention of men. Since this groundless conjecture is necessary to uphold this scheme of calculation, the whole system, which is built on it, must fall to the ground.

Will the blessed Millennium commence when the Jews shall be converted? No. "The Jews," says he, "shall be converted, A. D. 2028. They shall be under discipline 40 years, Mic. vii. 14, 15, which make 2068." Micah's words, which are here referred to, are the following:—"Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood in the midst of Carmel; let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old. According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things." For two reasons I am obliged to say, that these verses contain no proof of this opinion. The immediate context seems to prove that they do not refer to the millennial de-

liverance; and though they should predict the final restoration of Israel, they neither countenance nor support the supposition of a forty years' discipline.

In the two following verses, the Prophet says,—“The nations shall see, and be confounded at all their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee.” At Israel's deliverance, which is here predicted, the nations are represented as filled with malignant astonishment and confusion, as desiring neither to speak nor to hear of it, as seized with great grief and perplexity, and as overwhelmed with terror at the Divine operations, and at his people's salvation. That the Jews may have some enemies, who may have such emotions excited in them, at Israel's glorious deliverance, there is no reason to doubt; but that the nations shall be so affected may justly be questioned. By this time, the nations will be enlightened with the holy scriptures; will understand the nature of those dispensations of providence and grace; will see in them a display of the Divine glory, the fulfilment of scripture predictions, and the approach of blessedness to the church; and will be disposed to hail the happy day, by singing songs of praise to the Lord for this wonderful deliverance. We all know, however, that this is a true description of the dispositions and conduct of the nations when the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity, to which event this prediction may be more properly applied.

As I am not inclined to restrict the application of Old Testament predictions; let it be granted that the Jews' final return to their own land, is the event which is here foretold. Upon this admission, this prophecy will not prove that the Jews, after their conversion, will be under discipline forty years. By the “days of their coming out of the land of Egypt,” we certainly should understand the period immediately before and after their triumphant march from the house of bondage. These days include the season of the plagues; of their keeping the first Passover; of the preservation of their first-born; of their solemn departure from Egypt, loaded with the spoils of their opposers; of their miraculous passage with their little ones and cattle through the Red Sea, while the Egyptians, who wickedly pursued them, sank like lead into the mighty waters; of their religious ob-

servation of this deliverance by songs of praise to the Lord; and of the blessings which the Lord bestowed on them in the wilderness, till the day when the people rebelled against him, and believed the false report of the unfaithful spies concerning the land of Canaan. It was in those operations of Divine grace and power, that the Lord had shown to his people marvellous things, in the days of their coming out of the land of Egypt. In all their generations they were taught to sing; "Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap," &c. Psal. lxxviii. 12—16.—On the fifteenth day of the first month of their sacred year, the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt. As soon as they began their march, the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light."—On the fifteenth day of the second month, they came to the wilderness of Sin, where the Lord gave them manna—bread from heaven to eat. At Rephidim, immediately after, he brought forth water to them out of the rock.—On the third month after they had come out of the land of Egypt, they came into the wilderness of Sinai, and Israel encamped before that mount. At this place the God of Jacob, in the most solemn manner, delivered to his people his most holy law, and gave them many other statutes and judgments.—In the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle, according to God's command to Moses, was reared in the wilderness. The house of Aaron was then consecrated to the priesthood, and the tribe of Levi to the service of the tabernacle. At this time, the days of their coming out of the land of Egypt were terminated. These are the marvellous things which the Lord shewed his people in those days.—The forty years, during which that rebellious generation were doomed to bear their iniquities in the wilderness, and to perish there, commenced immediately after this, and continued till they arrived at Canaan. Micah's prediction assures the Jews, that when the Lord shall deliver them from their unbelief and dispersion, he will accomplish for them all those marvellous works, which their difficult and dangerous situation may require, as he did to their fathers coming out of the land of Egypt, by feeding them as the flock of his heritage with his pastoral staff, while they may be in distress as in the midst of Carmel, till he bring

them to their own land, and cause them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old. There is a great difference between these two expressions, "The days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt;" and, "ye shall bear your iniquities forty years." The former were fulfilled before the latter commenced. The days of their coming out of Egypt, and the forty years bearing their iniquities, are two different periods of time, not coeval with one another; but the latter immediately succeeds the former. Their bearing their iniquities forty years, must not be mistaken and substituted for the days of their coming out of the land of Egypt. This is using a liberty in explanation, which no text can bear. This opinion also supposes, that the Jews, after their conversion, shall, like their fathers in the wilderness, commit against God, some heinous and aggravated transgressions, which will provoke him to prevent their entering into their own land for the space of forty years, after they have found the Messiah. With all deference to those great men, who have adopted this sentiment, and built it on this prediction, I am obliged to declare, that it gives no authority for believing any such thing. There is the more reason for this averment, because no other prediction, that I can recollect, bears a clearer reference, or indeed any reference at all, to this opinion. On these accounts, it must be considered as an unwarranted conjecture, and that system of calculation, of which it is a necessary part, may be considered as fallacious.

Will the Millennium begin at the expiration of these forty years' discipline? No. "Allowing," says he, "four or five years for the battle of Armageddon, binding of Satan, and establishing peace in the world, we have 2072; Rev. xx. 1—8." A short enough allowance of time, surely, for accomplishing transactions, which are so solemn in their nature, and important in their consequences.

Besides those opinions which have been considered, there are several other sentiments which are objectionable; but as they do not properly belong to my design, I shall not investigate them particularly. They are the following:—That the temporal power of the Pope is the tenth part of the city;—That the seventh trumpet will not sound, and none of the vials will be poured out, till the Pope's temporal power shall be destroyed, and the Ottoman empire be dissolved;—That the death of the witnesses shall take place immediately before 1998;—That the battle of Armageddon shall be fought near

Jerusalem ;—And that John's 1260 years do not include the period of the vials.

On the first of those opinions, it may be said, that the tenth part of a city is a strange symbol for the Pope's temporal power, and that the falling of the tenth part of a city is a very unsuitable representation of the destruction of that power. Of this great city we read, that it is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified, that it was divided into three parts, and came up in remembrance before God, when the seventh vial was poured out. It is not easy to conceive, how the Pope's temporal power can be the tenth part of a city, which is thus described. The falling of the tenth part of the city has been understood to symbolize the defection of a conspicuous part of his adherents, from their subjection to him. This is easy to be understood; but the other is not so. As this opinion obliges the Author to place the removal of this power, under the sixth trumpet, it may be considered as one of his fundamental errors. But at the battle of Armageddon, which, according to him, is seventy-four years after the destruction of his temporal power, the head of the Roman hierarchy will be all that ever he was, in any period of his existence, Rev. xix. 19, 20. The second and third of those opinions are the necessary consequences of the first. Having adopted the one, the other two, strange and singular as they are, must also be maintained.

The fourth opinion is founded in Dan. xi. 45. This prediction seems to have had its accomplishment in the cruel and impious conduct of Antiochus Epiphanes, and in his miserable end. Though he was a type of the great Antichrist, it cannot be perfectly satisfactory to apply to the anti-type, every circumstance in the prediction, which was accomplished in the type. It is a pity that judicious writers should have with so much confidence, built such a mighty fabric as this, and the things connected with it, on so slender a foundation as the detached part of an Old Testament prediction, which in the events of former times, has had a most unequivocal accomplishment. The destruction of the antichristian beast, in any place, must sufficiently verify the prophecy, without bringing him to the very spot, where the object which prefigured him, came to his miserable end.

The last of those opinions deserves a more particular consideration. If John's number of 1260 years comes no farther than 1998,

according to his view of the times, there is a period of 74 years left out of his prophetic chronology; while he gives most minutely, in chap. xv. xvi. and in some other parts of his book, a prophetic account of the events of that period. How can this be accounted for? That John should exclude from his numerical chronology that season, of which above all others, he distinctly foretells the transactions, is really not to be believed. It will appear to be still more difficult to embrace this opinion, if we consider, that at the expiration of the 74 years, the period to which his number is supposed not to extend, he begins a new chronology of the events, in two particulars, the one numerical, the other descriptive. The account which is numerical, is the 1000 years for the duration of the church's prevalence, purity and peace; and that which is descriptive is the "little season," during which Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, when the 1000 years are expired. Can we suppose, that John would give prophetic numbers, which begin at the rise of Antichrist and terminate at the day of judgment, and exclude 74 years, about the middle of that period, out of his chronology? It must be very irrational to suppose, that John's numbers are not successive. As Daniel's 1260 days, his 30 days and his 45 days exactly succeed one another; so John's 1260 days, his 1000 years, and his "little season," are equally successive, and closely follow each other. As John's little season will begin when his 1000 years are expired; so his 1000 years must commence when his 1260 days run out. It is not, therefore, reasonable to suppose, that the prophetic chronology of John for that period, the events of which he largely predicts, must be supplied from that of Daniel. There is no defect in either of these schemes of prophetic numbers to be supplied from the other; but each of them is a distinct and perfect scheme by itself. We will introduce confusion into our views of the word and works of the God of order, if we blend them together, and do not keep them entirely distinct. Those calculations which are formed, by using, at one time, the numbers of John, and at another time, the numbers of Daniel, building one prophetic number upon another, till we erect a fabric of many stories, and stretch out the time to its greatest conceivable extent, may justly be suspected of error. By this scheme, the Pope of Rome was in possession of his blasphemous supremacy over the church 223 years, before he became a temporal power, and will continue in the enjoyment and exercise

of that antichristian headship for 74 years after his temporal power has been destroyed; and yet it is as he ~~has~~ possessed of temporal power that he may be considered as the beast, whose existence, in that character, is 1260 prophetic, or 1242 civil years. From this scheme it must also follow, that the time of his existence in his ecclesiastic supremacy, that denomination of him under which prophecy describes his characters and conduct, will be 1539 years. Such are the conclusions, to which our mingling the numbers of Daniel with those of John, necessarily conduct us.

In opposition to the scheme which has been examined, I shall bring into view what I have now said, concerning the prophetic numbers, in connexion with what I have formerly said, in that discourse to which this is a supplement. From the year 133 before Christ, when the Roman state became an Asiatic power, to the time when the Emperor Justinian, by an imperial decree, constituted the Bishop of Rome the head over all the churches, in A. D. 533, there are 666 years, the age of the Roman secular beast, from the time when he began to devour in Asia, to break in pieces, and to stamp the residue with his feet, till the time when he identified himself with Antichrist, and became the beast that carried the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. From 533 to 1792 inclusive, we have Daniel's number of 1260 years, when the judgment began to sit and the seven vials to be poured out. From 1792 to 1822 we have Daniel's 30 years, at the expiration of which the Jews' conversion is expected to commence, or a new scene of judgments may begin, or perhaps both of them together, Dan. xii. 1. From 1822 we have Daniel's 45 years, the last of which, as belonging to the millennium, being subtracted from that number, gives us the 1866th year, as the time when the judgment shall be finished, and the vials completely poured out.

From the 60th year before Christ, when the Romans had conquered Asia, had made the eastern nations Roman provinces or tributary states, and had triumphed over their enemies, there are 666 years till 606, when the Emperor Phocas, by another imperial decree, ratified to the Bishop of Rome his Antichristian supremacy, caused him triumph over his rivals, and enabled him to overcome his competitors for the chair of St. Peter. When John's 1260 years are added to 606, we are brought to the very same year, 1866: after which the blessed millennium will commence, in the year

1867, which will be the 1335th year of Daniel's numbers, and the first year of John's number of one thousand years, Dan. xii. 12. Rev. xx. 6.

These two remarkable epochs of the Roman secular beast, 133, and 60, before Christ, by the addition of 666, the number of the beast, to each of them, answering so exactly to 583 and 606, the dates of the imperial decrees concerning the Antichristian power, may fill us with wonder, and engage our serious attention. The addition of Daniel's 1334 years to the former of those numbers, and of John's 1260 years to the latter of them, terminating, as they do, in the same year, 1866, may also fill us with astonishment, and command our careful consideration. Thus I have given some of the reasons for disagreeing with the statement of dates contained in this paper; and some of the grounds, by which our belief in the calculations I have opposed to it, is encouraged and strengthened.

If any are disposed to object to those calculations, because there is a twofold date mentioned in them for the rise of Antichrist; it may be observed, for their satisfaction, that this is not contrary to the analogy of similar predictions. The captivity to Babylon had a commencement and a perfection; the same may be the case with the rise of the Antichristian beast, and the subjection of the church to his power and oppression. The principal reason, however, that can be assigned for this twofold date is, the double scheme of numbers representing this period, with which the Spirit, who indited prophecy, has furnished us; and the double system of providential operations, by which both of them appear to be fulfilled. We are led to this view of the dates, not by choice, but from necessity. Since Daniel, the prophetic statesman, the man greatly beloved, has given us a series of numbers, from the first appearance of Antichrist, till the first year of the millennium, which answers exactly to one chain of the providences; since John, the prophetic divine, the disciple whom Jesus loved, has given us a prophetic number, which agrees to the other operations of Providence, and both terminate at the same year; and since John has given us another number, descriptive of the secular beast's age at Antichrist's rise, and Providence has furnished us with two conspicuous eras of the secular beast, when he entered on the scene of prophecy, and when his power was established in the east, between each of which, and the

times when Antichrist was placed in his seat, and was afterwards confirmed in it, there are precisely 666 years; we are encouraged to make this application of the numbers to the events, and to look and hope for their consummation in 1867.

The judicious writer of this paper candidly says:—"But be it remembered, that in all the calculations, it is not intended to assert any thing dogmatically." It becomes us all, in treating subjects of this kind, to say the same thing. Those Old and New Testament predictions, relative to Antichrist, consisting of so many parts, referring to such numerous and important transactions, and extending to so long a time; predictions to which so much attention has been given, on which so many have written, and concerning which so many different opinions have been entertained, must present themselves to the mind of an inquirer into their meaning, as a subject of difficult investigation. A strong desire of the happy time which their accomplishment will introduce, may insensibly dispose us to antedate the period of their fulfilment. A sense of the number of the events, which it may be supposed are yet to take place before this desirable day can dawn, may have a secret and powerful influence in determining us to postpone the date of this glorious season. The present dispensations of Providence, being mixed with indications of its speedy approach, and with visible obstructions to its coming, may either excite in us too sanguine expectations, or fill our minds with too much despondency. The same person may be at one time under the influence of the former, and at another time he may be affected with the latter. On this momentous concern, Christians should think soberly, should live by the faith of the Son of God, should wait on him for the accomplishment of his word, should pray earnestly for the prosperity of the church, should commit to God the accomplishment of his own word, and should live under the daily impressions of death, judgment, and eternity.

There is reason to believe, that the church will not be kept long in suspense, concerning those important matters. If nothing of a singular nature take place, either among the Jews, or among the European nations, in, or about the year 1822; and if all things continue in their present situation, after that time, Christians may conclude that there is some mistake in the above calculations. But if a visible shaking among the dry bones of the scattered nation of the seed of Israel shall take place about that time; or, if the tran-

quillity of Europe shall then be disturbed, and nation shall again rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, this may be considered as a presage of the last sorrows, and the church may lift up her head and rejoice, for the day of her redemption will appear to be drawing nigh.

The church will never be able to attain, with perfect certainty, the knowledge of the termination of those times, till the predictions themselves are fulfilled. We ought to inquire into these things, we should also form an opinion concerning them, we are warranted, with humility, even to make this known to others; but we should carefully avoid presumptuous and dogmatical assertions. This partial uncertainty, under which the Lord is pleased to place his church, has not, in itself, any tendency to darken our knowledge of the church's happiness, to weaken our faith in it, or to discourage our hope of its coming. From the revelation of those things to us in the Divine word, we are furnished with as ample means for knowing its nature, for believing its truth, and for hoping for it at the Lord's time, as if we knew the day and the hour, when all those things shall be fulfilled. Neither can this uncertainty have any tendency, in itself, to damp our spiritual concern, about the coming of this season; or to paralyze our active endeavours for promoting the interests of our Redeemer's kingdom. It has, however, a blessed tendency to increase our humility and dependence on God; to enlarge our hearts in waiting on him, and watching for his coming; to excite us to search the Scriptures, to meditate, to pray, and to talk to one another concerning his doings; and to obey the command, to improve the information, and to believe the promises, which are contained in the Apostle's words, with respect both to our own salvation, and the church's enlargement: "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience; that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith."

From the things that are coming to pass in our times, it is the Divine call to the followers of Jesus; "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." The saints, who exercise aright their spiritual wisdom, will be making constant preparation for ordinances and providences, for death and a future state. The church may look for a season of

public calamities, and a day of glorious deliverance. Since the cessation of bloody wars, the nations, especially our own, have suffered, in different ways, unparalleled distress. There is reason to fear, that at one time or another, the storm will increase. For this we should make preparation. The exercise of faith in Jesus as our Saviour, and in God as our Father and Portion in him, should be our study; saying, "Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." Freedom from immoderate attachment to worldly enjoyments should also be our concern; hearkening to the Divine call, "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not; for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord." A scriptural view of God's design in all the judgments of his hand constitutes a part of this preparation; "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name." Cleaving to the truths of the gospel in our profession, and to the precepts of the holy law in our practice, make an important part of this preparation which is required of us. We should also seek preparation for the church's deliverance. When the mind is deeply affected with a conviction of the glory that shall be given to God, the honour that shall redound to Christ, and the felicity that shall be brought to men, by the church's enlargement; when the heart is filled with desire that Satan's kingdom, in all its forms, may fall like lightning from heaven; and when these impressions constrain to prayer, expectation, and zealous concern that the Sun of righteousness may arise upon the nations with healing under his wings, the Christian has some comfortable preparation for that happy day, "When the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

TWO

ESSAYS

ON

DANIEL'S PROPHETIC NUMBER

OF

TWO THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED DAYS;

AND ON

The Christian's Duty

TO INQUIRE INTO

THE CHURCH'S DELIVERANCE.

BY ARCHIBALD MASON.

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ESSAY I.

OR

DANIEL'S PROPHETIC NUMBER OF TWO THOUSAND THREE
HUNDRED DAYS.

THE eighth chapter in the book of Daniel contains the record of an extraordinary vision, which that prophet saw, when, in the third year of Belshazzar's reign, he was residing in the palace at Shushan, in the province of Elam, and standing on the banks of the river Ulai. The object which was first presented to his view was a ram, which had two horns; and the two horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last. This ram symbolized the Persian and Median kingdom, which was represented by the silver breast and arms of Nebuchadnezzar's image; and by the second beast, like to a bear, in Daniel's vision of the four monarchies. "He saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will and became great." This kingdom overthrew the empire of Babylon, and subdued, under its dominion, all the nations of the east.

While Daniel was observing the appearance and operations of the ram, and thinking on the meaning of the vision, his attention was immediately directed to another object:—"And as I was considering, behold, an he-goat came from the west, on the face of the whole earth; and touched not the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes." The he-goat represented the Grecian empire, which was signified by the brazen belly and thighs of the king's image, and by the third beast, like a leopard, in the vision of the prophet. The Grecian armies came from the west,

under the command of Alexander, who was the notable horn between the goat's eyes. Those armies marched with incredible rapidity, attacked furiously the Persian armies, defeated them completely in a few battles, overturned the empire, and subdued the nations, of which it was composed, under their authority. In this vision the prophet saw, that the "he-goat waxed very great; and when he was strong the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven." This part of the vision was most minutely accomplished, in the death of Alexander, and in the division of his empire into four great kingdoms; that of Macedonia in the west, the Syrian in the east, the Egyptian in the south, and that of Pergamus in the north. How exactly have Divine predictions been fulfilled! How perfectly does the Lord know the end from the beginning! How minutely has he fulfilled in his providence, what he has purposed in himself, and spoken in his word! We may, therefore, expect the deliverances which he has foretold, and the blessings which he has promised; for he will do as he has said.

The prophet's attention was now attracted by another object, which was set before him in the vision:—"And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and practised and prospered," ver. 9, 10, 11, 12. This little horn cannot signify the Mahometan empire; for it did not come out of any of the kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided. Neither could the little horn symbolize the Roman empire. This was represented by the legs and feet of the image in the king's dream, and by the fourth beast in the vision of Daniel. Besides, the Roman power had an origin very different from any of those kingdoms which came into existence by the division of the Grecian empire. This part of the vision was circumstantially fulfilled in the person and government of that Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes, to whose character and conduct, every

particular in the foregoing description, and in the angel's explanation of this part of the vision, in ver. 23, 24, 25, will most exactly apply. The object that is called in the vision, "a little horn," is denominated, in the angelic explanation, "a king of fierce countenance," importing that he was to be an individual man, vested with royal authority. Antiochus Epiphanes must be considered as a type of the antichristian and popish power of Rome. The angel informed Daniel, ver. 17; "For at the time of the end shall be the vision," the full accomplishment of the vision. He adds, ver. 19; "Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation; for at the time appointed the end shall be." The angel concluded his explanation of the vision, with those words:—"Wherefore shut thou up the vision, for it shall be for many days," ver. 26. The time of the end did not come, the last end of the indignation did not arrive, neither did the many days expire at the miserable death of Antiochus. Some other power, therefore, must be signified by this part of the vision, besides that of the Syrian monarch; and this can be no other than the antichristian and idolatrous church of Rome. The idolatry, the policy and craft, the cruelty and persecution, the tyranny and success of this Syrian monster, and his hatred of the church of God, have been exemplified, exceeded, and for a very long time practised by the Popes of Rome. The procuring cause of their ascendancy over the church is the same. It was by reason of transgression among the Jews, ver. 12, that God gave them over to the power of Antiochus; and it was because professed Christians received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, and believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, that God suffered them to fall under the delusions of Antichrist, to believe his lies, 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11, 12. To all professed Christians, these are awful warnings. How great should be our concern, and how careful our endeavours to embrace and improve the truth, by faith and love; to abhor unrighteousness, and to study true holiness; lest the Lord give us up to our own heart's lusts, and then we shall walk in our own counsels.

After those objects were discovered to the prophet, his attention was engaged by his hearing a voice, "Then I heard one saint speaking; and another saint said unto that certain saint who spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host

to be trodden under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," ver. 13; 14. Daniel heard an angel, or holy one, speaking; and another angel, or holy one, asked that angel the important question which the 13th verse contains. When the angel returned the answer to Daniel, and not to the other angel, it plainly proves, that it was for the prophet's information, that the question was both proposed and answered. The daily sacrifice, in this vision, signifies the instituted worship of God in the church; and the desolation and treading down of the sanctuary and the host, means the error, superstition and idolatry, that were established instead of that worship. The question is an inquiry into the time that must elapse from the date of this number, to the time when the profanation of the sanctuary and the host shall come to an end, and the true worship of God shall be restored. This question is answered in the following words:—"Unto two thousand and three hundred days." The answer also describes the event which will take place at the expiration of those days; and assures us, upon the veracity of that God whose servant the angel was, of the certainty of that event:—"Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

It does not seem possible to apply this number, in a satisfactory manner, to measure the duration of the temple's profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. The most plausible and ingenious attempt at this, known to me, is made by Magnus Frederic Roos, a German divine, in the following words:—"Now, how long did this removal of the daily sacrifice, and the desolation of the temple last? Two thousand and three hundred evening-mornings. The evening is placed before the morning, agreeably to the Jewish manner of reckoning their days. Two thousand and three hundred evening and morning sacrifices were omitted; consequently one thousand one hundred and fifty evening sacrifices, and one thousand one hundred and fifty morning sacrifices. If we turn to the books of the Maccabees, we will find that Antiochus Epiphanes caused the abomination of desolation, i. e. an abominable image to be set on the altar of God, on the fifteenth day of the month Chisleu, in the 145th year of the Grecian era, or B. C. 168; see 1 Macc. i. 54; and that the temple was purged, and the daily sacrifice restored, on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is the month

Chisleu, in the 145th year of the Grecian era, 1 Macc. iv. 52. From the one term to the other are three years and ten days. The remaining five and forty days, or ninety evening-mornings, elapsed before the erection of the image, as may be concluded from 1 Macc. i. 38, 39, 40, it being naturally to be supposed, that the Jews would be hindered by the soldiers of Antiochus from sacrificing, even while the idol was preparing, and before they placed it on the altar of God.*

Without saying any thing about the method he adopts, in calculating the number of sacrifices, instead of the number of days, by which they are reduced to one thousand one hundred and fifty days; his statement, in other things, is far from being satisfactory. From the Maccabean history, nothing is certain, as to this number, but that one thousand one hundred and five days elapsed, from the day in which the abominable idol was placed on God's altar, and that memorable day when the morning and evening sacrifices were restored. The manner in which he accounts for the remaining forty-five days, or the ninety evening and morning sacrifices, is all conjecture and supposition. We have no account of the preparation of the image at Jerusalem. The probability seems rather to be, that it was one of the idols which accompanied the army, and that it was placed on the altar of God, immediately after the king's soldiers had most treacherously attacked and cruelly murdered many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and forced a greater multitude to flee from the holy city. The three verses to which he refers us, in 1 Macc. i. 38, 39, 40, contain nothing concerning the ceasing of the evening and morning sacrifices, for the space of forty-five days, prior to the introduction of the heathen's idol into the Lord's sanctuary; and, therefore, this supposition cannot be admitted as a satisfactory proof.

Whether this number can be applied, in any sense, to the time during which the temple lay under the profanation of the heathen, in the days of Antiochus, is a matter of very inferior importance; for, we are assured, that the vision will reach to the time of the end. This expression is used twice in the last chapter of this book, as a description of the time at which the numbers that are mentioned there, will terminate; and, we are assured, that they refer to the

commencement of the Christian millennium. This number of two thousand three hundred days, is not connected with Daniel's other numbers, which are mentioned, chap. vii. 25; xii. 7, 11, 12; nor with any of the numbers mentioned by John, in his Revelations. Its commencement and termination are different from the beginning and ending of any of them. The event, which will take place when it expires, is also different from the events which will happen when they run out. It is a collateral number, given to us by the Spirit of prophecy, to guide us to the knowledge of the time of the end; and to confirm our belief of Antichrist's fall, and the church's deliverance. This number, therefore, belongs exclusively to the popish pollutions of the sanctuary.

Two of the most popular English writers on Prophecy,* of late years, are of the opinion, that this number should be dated from the pushing of the ram; or from the time when the kingdom of the Persians and Medes exerted itself in war, to enlarge its dominions. They differ indeed about the particular time, or act, of pushing, from which this number should be dated. The pushing of the ram, no doubt, is one important circumstance in the vision. But there is no warrant to date this number from that circumstance. To mark the date of a Scripture number, which has a relation to the church of God, from a circumstance in the vision, to which the number is appended, without any authority from any part of the vision, must certainly be very hazardous. There are other circumstances in the vision which seem to have an equal, if not a superior, claim to that honour. The appearance of the ram, the rising of the second horn, or the union of the two kingdoms under one ruler, may be some of those circumstances. Besides the warlike exertions and conquests of the Persians and Medes, continuing as they did for so long a time and during the reign of several of their kings, render it impossible to fix on an indisputable era; and, therefore, it is obvious that each of those writers has fixed on that period, which agrees best with his preconceived hypothesis. Since the pushing of the ram was to make him great, so that no beast might stand before him, nor could any deliver out of his hand, but he did according to his will; it must be very absurd, in one of those writers, to fix, for

the date of this number, on an act of his pushing, in which he received a most decisive and ignominious defeat. Since this number must continue till the time of the end, and the last indignation, it must be equally absurd in the other writer, by cutting off an hundred days from the number, and fixing its date in such a way, as cause it to have expired many years ago. By this method of proceeding, the explanation of the most important things, relative to the prophetic numbers, is regulated by the conjectures of men. We may, therefore, feel ourselves authorized to dismiss all those calculations, as mere human inventions.

I have lately seen a small Pamphlet, which was first published in America, by the Rev. William E. Davis, South Carolina, and republished in 1818, at Workington, in the North of England. This Author asserts that the two thousand three hundred days commence with Daniel's seventy weeks, which are mentioned, chap. ix. 29. In this opinion, I am constrained to concur. Though there are some things, in his manner of calculating them, with which I do not agree; and a number of his speculations, on the three last vials, in which I think he is wrong; yet, in his opinion about the commencement of this number, I am persuaded he is perfectly correct. Having mentioned my obligation to this Author, I shall now endeavour to avail myself of the idea which he has suggested.

The Spirit of prophecy has not said, that the two thousand three hundred days began with the seventy weeks; and, therefore, positive certainty, on this matter, by express Scripture testimony, is unattainable. But if it can be shown that there is such a connexion between those visions, and that such things are said of them as do authorise us to conclude that the numbers mentioned in them, began at the same time; it will lay a foundation for a judgment or belief concerning it, amounting either to a high degree of probability, or to that certainty which arises from scriptural deductions. A statement of those things is now to be made:—

This opinion appears to be reasonable. The prophet is directed to give us a number, fixing the fall of popery, near the beginning of the Christian millennium, a part of which must expire under the Old Testament dispensation, without giving us any information concerning its commencement. The prophet is also directed to give us another number, which terminated exactly at the end of that dispensation, the beginning and the ending of which number are

clearly revealed to the church. Are we not warranted to believe, that the clearness of the latter number is intended to remove the obscurity of the former; that the seventy weeks are the first part of the two thousand three hundred days; and that both numbers commenced at the same time? If we reject this, all things about the beginning and the end of this number must be uncertain; but by adopting it, every thing about it will be satisfactorily ascertained. The two thousand three hundred days is the only number which is mentioned, either in the book of Daniel, or in the revelation of John, that extends to the time of the end, and begins under the former dispensation. It does not seem consistent with the wisdom and goodness of God, to leave his church entirely destitute of light to guide her members to the knowledge of the time of the end, by this important and extraordinary number. Most certainly, however, this is the case, unless this method of ascertaining it is adopted.

This opinion is also highly probable, because the same angel, whom the Lord employed to explain to Daniel the vision of the ram and the he-goat, was dispatched to him, to make the comfortable revelations concerning the seventy weeks. After Daniel had seen the former vision, and had been told how long it was to continue, he heard, between the banks of Ulai, a man's voice, which called and said, "Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision." When Daniel was finishing his religious exercise of confession, of prayer and fasting, for the deliverance of his people from their captivity, the same angel was caused to fly swiftly, and touched him at the time of the evening sacrifice, and informed him that the promised Messiah should appear, and finish his work at the expiration of seventy weeks. In both ministrations, the employment of this angel was the same. With respect to the former, his words are these, "Understand, O son of man, for at the time of the end, shall be the vision. Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation," Dan. viii. 17, 19. He says in the latter ministration, "I am now come to give thee skill and understanding. Therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision," Dan. ix. 22, 23. Since the same angel was employed in these two important services; since his work in them both is the same; and since his name is not mentioned in any other of Daniel's visions; it is highly probable, that the visions are intimately connected, and are so far one as to have the same date. They very much resemble

that two ministrations which that same angel performed, first to Zacharias, and then to Mary, when he intimated to the latter the birth of our Lord, and to the former the birth of his harbinger.

There is not only reasonableness and probability on the side of this opinion; but there is something in it very like certainty. Daniel's words, when he describes the angelic messenger who informed him of the seventy weeks, seem to prove the identity of those visions: "Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, the man, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning," ver. 21. The vision which is referred to in those words, is the vision of the ram and the he-goat, chap. viii. 16. This was not the beginning of Daniel's prophetic visions. Many years before he had this vision, it is said of him, "Then was the secret revealed to him in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven," chap. ii. 19. Two years before he saw the vision of the ram and the he-goat, he was privileged with a most extraordinary vision, in which were represented to him four beasts symbolizing the four successive monarchies; the little horn, or papal kingdom, which rose out of the fourth beast, or the Roman empire; the cruelty and prevalence of this horn over the church; the duration of this horn; the solemn judgment that was held for its destruction; its awful ruin; the glory of Christ, the prosperity of his kingdom, and the felicity of his saints, after this horn had gone into perdition, which discoveries comprehended all the grand operations of Providence, from his own day till the end of the Christian millennium, chap. vii. The vision of the ram and the he-goat was not, therefore, the beginning of his prophetic visions; and could not, on that ground, be called "the vision at the beginning." The same original word which is used by the prophet, and rendered, at the beginning; is also employed by the angel, ver. 23, and translated in the same manner, "At the beginning of thy supplications." For what reason is it called the vision at the beginning? When Daniel, in giving an account of his vision of the seventy weeks, calls the vision of the ram and the he-goat, the vision at the beginning, it certainly imports, that the two visions are, in some respects, the same; that there is such a connexion between them, that the first is an introduction to the second, and the second an explanation of the first, and therefore they must have commenced together; though, on the account of the disparity of the numbers which they contain, and the difference in the events which they predict, they cannot end at the same time.

This will be farther evident, if it is considered, that the two thousand three hundred days must have commenced after the fall of the Babylonian empire, and when the Persians and Medes had in their hands the government of the world. Neither the first nor the fourth beasts are mentioned in this vision. This number must have begun after the fall of the former, and before the appearance of the latter. This is the very time when the seventy weeks began: They were to begin at the going forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem. Now this commandment was given by one of the Persian kings, after the empire of Babylon, which brought them into captivity, had perished from the earth. This also strengthens the proof, that these numbers began at the same time.

Another consideration which will corroborate this opinion, is suggested by the objects of Daniel's concern, in his solemn exercises of confession, fasting, and prayer, when he received the vision about the seventy weeks. After he had confessed his own sin, the sin of his people, and the sin of their fathers, from ver. 4th to ver. 15th, inclusive; he presented his supplication to the Lord, in the following words:—"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain. Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant; and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary, that is desolate, for the Lord's sake," Dan. ix. 16, 17. He also describes the object of his concern, ver. 20:—"Now whiles I was presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God." As the answer which he received contained much more than he desired, it was a most satisfactory reply to his requests. One principal design of the vision of the ram and the he-goat was to predict the desolation and cleansing of the sanctuary, and therefore the angel calls it, "The vision of the evening and the morning" sacrifice, chap. viii. 26. Daniel's chief concern on the other occasion, was to bewail the desolation of God's sanctuary, and to pray for its restoration. When he, near the end of the captivity, was lamenting over the desolation of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, praying for the removal of the Divine displeasure from his house and his people, and pleading so earnestly, ver. 18, 19, for the Lord's favour and mercy to them, we may conclude, that he would have a fresh remembrance of the vision he had seen, concerning the profanation and the cleansing of the sanctuary, at the

expiration of the two thousand and three hundred days. Though those pollutions and purification of the sanctuary are not the same, yet when both visions have a relation to the sanctuary, and to its defilement and cleansing, it forms such a connexion between them, and presents them to our view with such an identity of object, as encourage a belief, that the numbers belonging to them began at the same time. Besides, the sanctuary desolation which Daniel bewailed, and that sanctuary purification for which he prayed, when he received the vision of the seventy weeks, were eminent and special types of that profanation of the sanctuary, and of that cleansing of it, that were revealed to him, in the vision of the ram and the he-goat. This consideration forms another connexion between the visions.

It may also be observed, that the angel's words, with which he concluded the explanation of the seventy weeks, describe that very object which is foretold in the other vision, and plainly imply the church's last deliverance, of which that vision assures us. As the angel, in ver. 26, predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, in those words, "and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined;" so in ver. 27, he foretells the church's desolation, by Antichrist, till the cleansing of the sanctuary, and his words also imply that cleansing, "And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." These words do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, for that event is most distinctly predicted in the foregoing verse. In the words, there are the cause—the judgment—the duration of both—and the confirmation of the whole. The cause is the overspreading of abominations, by popery, the mother of harlots; the judgment, or the sufferings of the Christian church, she is made desolate, the inhabitant of a wilderness; the duration of both, even until the consummation, the time of the end, and the last end of the indignation, at the expiration of the two thousand three hundred days; and the certainty of all this, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. These words also imply, though they do not express, the church's deliverance; for when the work of sin, and the course of judgments are terminated, at the consummation; and when that determined is poured on the

desolate, then shall the church be delivered; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. If this application of the prophet's words to the Christian church is deemed a strained interpretation, our argument will lose nothing of its force by confining their meaning entirely to the state of the Jewish nation. The moral and spiritual condition of that people is described, "Even until the consummation." This is the same with "the time of the end," and "the last end of the indignation," which are mentioned in the other vision. This is the time, and these are the events that shall happen in that period; whether in the Christian church, or among the Jews, will make no difference in the present argument; for the time and events in the vision of the seventy weeks, extend to the utmost duration of the number, in the vision of the ram and the he-goat. Since the angel, in explaining the vision of the seventy weeks, introduced the duration, the progress, and final results of the vision of the ram and the he-goat; we may conclude that the numbers in both visions must commence at the same time. The time and the events of the former vision, being referred to in the latter, give this vision an interest in the number of the former, and fix a connexion betwixt the numbers in both visions. As the time of accomplishing the prediction of the consummation, or the time of the end, goes far beyond the number of the seventy weeks, there must be another number, which fixes the termination of those events which are predicted in both visions; and this can be no other than the number of the first vision, commencing with the seventy weeks.

The seasons which the Lord was pleased to choose, for giving to Daniel those important visions, fix also an intimate connexion between them. Fourteen years expired between the third year of Belshazzar, when he saw the vision of the ram and the he-goat, and the first year of Darius, when the vision of the seventy weeks was given to him. The former vision could not be longer delayed, nor could the latter be enjoyed sooner. The former vision, representing as it did the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon, as well as the Grecian conquest of Persia, behoved to be given before the fall of Babylon; that the Persian victories over the Babylonian empire might be the subject of this prophecy. The other vision could not be given in connexion with the prophet's solemn exercise and concern about the church's deliverance from her captivity, till the seventy years had nearly expired, till Babylon had fallen, and the

deliverers of the church had obtained the dominion. The vision of the ram and the he-goat was given three years after the war was actually begun, and fourteen years before it was ended. The vision of the seventy weeks was given on the first year after the war was finished, in the total destruction of the Babylonish monarchy. The connexion of those visions, in the wisdom of God, with the beginning and ending of that glorious war, which destroyed Babylon and delivered the church, tends to confirm the opinion that the numbers in them did begin at the same period. The Persian war against Babylon typified the Armageddon conflict with antichristian popery; the destruction of ancient Babylon, symbolized the overthrow of Babylon the great; and the church's deliverance from her captivity, represented the salvation and prosperity of the Christian church after the fall of New Testament Babylon. These are the events which will be accomplished at the consummation, at the time of the end, and at the expiration of the two thousand three hundred days; and, therefore, since those visions are thus connected, in the time when they were bestowed, in the circumstances that attended them, and in the matter which they contain, we surely have good grounds to believe in the corresponding commencement of their numbers.

The seventy weeks contain 490 days. Each day being put for one year, the period extends to 490 years, chap. ix. 24. This period commenced at the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, ver. 25. The decree of the Persian king, mentioned in this prophecy, must be the decree of Artaxerxes given to Ezra, in the seventh year of that monarch's reign. The decrees of Cyrus and Darius were too early, and the decree of Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, given to Nehemiah, was too late, for answering the prediction. Artaxerxes issued his decree to Ezra, in the 457th year before Christ. If we add to this number 33 years, which was our Redeemer's age at his crucifixion, we have 490 years. This prediction, therefore, was most exactly accomplished. O how perfectly does the Lord confirm the word of his servants, and perform the counsel of his messengers!

In his calculations, Mr. Davies takes no notice of the time, at which this number began; but arbitrarily fixes its termination in the 37th year of the Christian era. He does this from the view he has taken of the seventieth, or the last week, which he extends

to three years and an half, after Christ's death. He thinks that the half of the last week reaches to the calling of the Gentiles, by the preaching of Paul after his conversion, to the people of Arabia. From the two considerations which follow, this opinion, I think, is erroneous :—There are no dates of any of the Persian king's decrees, in favour of the Jews, which answer to this calculation. The want of this is a very material objection to its accuracy. Besides, every one of those most important things, which were to be fulfilled in the seventy weeks, were most completely accomplished at Christ's death. By the infinitely valuable sacrifice which Christ, in his death, offered to God for the sins of his people, he finished transgression; made an end of sin; made reconciliation for iniquity; perfected his everlasting righteousness, by which his people are justified; fulfilled all the predictions concerning himself, in the Old Testament visions and prophecies, and sanctified himself by his own blood, for conducting his mediatorial work; at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. Since all those glorious things were accomplished at Christ's death, and since the fulfilment of them was the sole reason why the seventy weeks were determined on the prophet's people, and the holy city; it must be impossible that these weeks can be extended beyond this most solemn event.

These seventy weeks are divided into three parts. The angel Gabriel mentions seven weeks, or forty-nine years, at the expiration of which, the building of the temple, the city and the wall, should be finished. He also mentions sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years, which reach from the former number to the beginning of the seventieth, or last week. "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself," ver. 26. When these weeks have expired, Messiah shall be cut off, in the last week. This week, being the most important of all the rest, is spoken of by itself, and is divided into two parts :—"And he shall confirm the covenant with many, for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," ver. 27. This week began "in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar," or the twenty-sixth year in the Christian era, when "the word of the Lord came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness;" and it ended in the thirty-third year of that era, at the death of Christ. This week contained the public ministry of John,

for about three years and a half, and the public ministry of Jesus Christ, for about the same time. This week began with the ministry of John, for he preached the kingdom of God; by instruction and baptism, he admitted members into it; and from his time, the life and power, and the peculiar Divine right of the Old Testament dispensation came to an end. When speaking of his Forerunner, Jesus himself asserts those important truths:—"And from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law, prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." * Christ also declares him to be more than a prophet, ver. 9. The ministry of John was a blessed mean for confirming the covenant with many Jews, for their everlasting salvation. Christ's public ministry and miracles, which immediately succeeded John's ministry, accomplished the same end. By both the former and the latter, our Divine Lord confirmed the covenant with many of the Jews, even with them who believed on his name. It is added, in this verse, "And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." This seems to import that Christ died in the midst of that week. The original word which is here translated, the midst, signifies also the half, and is so translated in many parts of the Old Testament. It ought to have been so translated in this place. And in the half of the week he will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. Which half of the week is intended, may be easily understood from the scope of the verse, from the action, and from its effect. These will guide our view to Messiah's being cut off in the last half of the week; for nothing but the death of Christ could cause the Jewish sacrifices and oblations to cease. All this was effected completely, on the last day of the seventieth week, when Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

The reason which Mr. Davies assigns for extending the half of the last week beyond the death of Christ, he states in the following words:—"The other half of the seventyeth week was reserved for the apostles to go on in establishing the covenant, or in preaching the gospel to the Jews, who were first to be converted to Christianity." He asserts that Paul was converted three years after Christ's death,

and that he went unto Arabia, and preached the gospel to the Gentiles, three years and a half after the day of Pentecost, and then the seventy weeks expired. The dates he mentions are uncertain, and the facts he states are not asserted in the Scripture. He has no dates but such as he assumes without proof; they may be somewhat probable, but they are not certain. In the sacred history, there is no account that Paul preached the gospel in Arabia. This is merely a conjecture. This is a way of ascertaining facts which cannot be admitted, especially in matters of such importance as these of which he is speaking. Not to the labours of the apostles, but to the ministry of John was the half of the last week appropriated, for confirming the covenant with many of the Jews. The apostles entered on another scene, and laboured in another field, even in the Christian church, completely and meritoriously established at Christ's death, and its ministrations begun about fifty days after his death, on the day of Pentecost. That John's ministry confirmed the covenant with many, is expressly declared to his father Zacharias, by the same angel who delivered to Daniel, the prediction concerning it:—"And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," Luke i. 15, 16, 17. The same thing was recognized by his father, ver. 76, 77:—"And thou, Child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord; to prepare his way; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins."

It does not appear that the apostles themselves, or the Christian church among the Jews, had any proper knowledge of this mystery, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel," till Peter saw the vision of the heavenly sheet, "wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air;" heard that command, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat;" made his objection to the Divine call; and received for answer, "What God hath cleansed that call not thou common." That the vision might be more satisfactory and convincing, it was

presented to him thrice. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, "Behold, three men seek thee, Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them." These things prepared the apostle for going to the house of Cornelius, and for preaching the gospel to a congregation of Gentiles, "when the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word." When Peter returned to Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians contended with him, for going unto the Gentiles. After he had given them an account of the whole matter, "They held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." That this was the first time that the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, seems evident from Peter's words, before the council which met at Jerusalem:—"Men and brethren, ye know how that, a good while ago, God made choicc among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." But this revelation about Cornelius happened in the forty-first year of the Christian era, the eighth year after the death of Christ. If Paul had preached the gospel and planted a Christian church in Arabia, seeing he came to Jerusalem four years before Cornelius sent for the apostle Peter, joined himself to the disciples, and was with the apostles for some time, coming in and going out at Jerusalem; How could they be ignorant of God's design, to send the gospel to the Gentiles? What need could they have of an extraordinary vision to direct them in this duty? And what reason could the Jewish Christians have, when Peter rehearsed the matter to them, concerning Cornelius, from the beginning, to exclaim, with wonder and joy, as if they had never formerly heard of any such thing,—Then hath God also to the Gentiles, granted repentance unto life? It may be rather supposed, that it was in Arabia, where Paul received from Jesus Christ, his apostolic office, and the full knowledge of the gospel. Accordingly he says, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," Gal. i. 12. After giving them a view of his life as a Pharisee, and an account of his conversion, he says, ver. 17, "Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them who were apostles before me," to receive the apostleship, and the knowledge of the gospel from them; "but I went into Arabia," where "I received both, by the immediate "revelation of Jesus Christ." We are assured, that he

received those revelations from Christ, at some time, and in some place; and as he contrasts his not going to Jerusalem for this end, with his going to Arabia, it seems probable, that he went thither for that purpose.

Having endeavoured to fix the date of the seventy weeks, or the four hundred and ninety years, and having shown that the two thousand three hundred days, or years, must commence with them; the calculation of the latter number may be easily, and I hope satisfactorily made. The two thousand three hundred years began four hundred and ninety years before the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and four hundred and fifty-seven years before his birth, at which the Christian era commenced. If we subtract 457 from 2300 the remainder will give that year in the Christian era, when the 2300 years will expire. By this simple operation, we find that this number will end in 1843. In that year, the Lord's sanctuary shall be cleansed, the church and the nations will be delivered from the abominations of the Mother of harlots, and Popery will perish from the earth. This year will not be the commencement of those judgments which will terminate in the cleansing of the sanctuary, as some, to accommodate it to their hypothesis, have explained the words; but, in this year, the work will be accomplished, and the sanctuary will be really cleansed. The Angel said, Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed; not begin to be cleansed, but the cleansing work shall be finished.

By our former calculations concerning the prophetic numbers, in a Discourse on them, and in an Appendix to that Discourse, we were led to conclude, that the one thousand three hundred and thirty-fifth year of Daniel's number, when the church's blessedness shall begin; and the first year of John's thousand years, when the church's reign with Christ shall commence, will both come in the year eighteen hundred and sixty-seven. The two thousand three hundred years will expire twenty-four years before that year which those calculations oblige us to fix for the commencement of the millennium. This difference, I humbly apprehend, is absolutely necessary. There must be a very great difference between the condition of the church, when the sanctuary shall be cleansed; and that state to which she will be advanced, when she shall be brought into her millennial rest. The cleansing of the sanctuary, or the destruction of Popery, will

not immediately introduce the church into her state of glory and prosperity on the earth. These twenty-four years will be employed in preparing her for entering into her millennial state, for enjoying her millennial privileges, and for singing her millennial songs. Many important transactions must be accomplished, after the fall of Babylon the great, before the church can be made ready for this marriage supper of the Lamb. For perfecting the knowledge of popish and other darkened nations, for bringing in the residue of the Jewish people, for the reformation of protestant churches, for spreading the Scriptures among men, for the powerful preaching of the gospel every where, for the conversion of multitudes through the world to the saving faith of Jesus, for recovering the nations from the dismal effects of the last plagues, and for settling, on its scriptural basis, the ordinance of civil government, these twenty-four years will be signally appropriated. The lapse of twenty-four days, in another solemn event, may be an emblem of those twenty-four years which intervene, between the fall of popery, and the beginning of the millennium. To represent this clearly, I shall make the following statement, which is mentioned, not as proof, but for illustration:—

The words which the angel spake, Dan. viii. 14,—“Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,” seem to contain an allusion to a period in the Old Testament church, when a work of the same kind was performed. In his answer, the angel does not use the words which are contained in the question of the other angel. He does not say, unto two thousand three hundred days, then shall the vision concerning the daily sacrifice come to an end; or, then shall the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot, be finished. But he said, Unto two thousand three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. There is no difference in the substance, or meaning of the answer; but the literal difference is both considerable and significant. This expression which the angel uttered would bring to the prophet's remembrance, that solemn transaction which took place in Judah, at the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah. In the xxix. chap. of 2 Chronicles, we have a most particular account of this great work. “Hezekiah, in the first year of his reign, and in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them,” ver. 3. He also brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together

into the east street. And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. After he had delivered to them a most affecting speech, of which these words are the beginning, fourteen persons, the heads of seven houses of the Levites, obeyed the call. "They gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord," ver. 15. In the next verse, the method they observed in performing this work, is clearly stated:—"And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the Lord, into the court of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron." The time that was spent in cleansing the sanctuary is mentioned, ver. 17,—“Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord; so they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; and, in the sixteenth day of the first month, they made an end.” The deputation which they sent to the king, to inform him that they had finished the work, is mentioned, ver. 18, 19. Immediately after the sanctuary, or house of the Lord, was cleansed, both the king and the people brought offerings and sacrifices, which the priests offered to the Lord on his own altar, accompanied with the songs of praise by the ministry of the Levites, and the religious worship of the whole congregation, the account of which is continued to the end of the chapter. In the words of the angel to Daniel, there is such an allusion to this solemn transaction, as will authorise us to consider it as an emblem of that work, which will be performed for the Christian church, when the two thousand three hundred years shall expire.

In connexion with this, we may also consider the pollution of the sanctuary in the days of Ahaz, as an emblem of the defilement of the Christian church, by the errors, idolatry, persecution, and wickedness of popery. The reign of Ahaz was remarkable for idolatry, cruelty, wars destructive to his people, changing the altar and ordinances of God, cringing subjection to other potentates, oppressive exactions from his subjects, deserting the house of the Lord, spoiling its treasures, and destroying its holy vessels. Between these and the conduct of the Romish church, there is a striking resemblance.

If the profanation of the temple by Ahaz, is an emblem of the defilement of the church by popery, and the cleansing the temple by Hezekiah, an emblem of the purification of the church at the expiration of the two thousand three hundred years, may we not also contemplate the solemn passover which Hezekiah kept, as an emblem of the Christian millennium? It was an extraordinary passover from the time on which it was observed. The whole congregation, availing themselves of the Divine law, respecting individuals,* kept it on the fourteenth day of the second month. It was extraordinary as to the worshippers. Having been invited by Hezekiah, many who belonged to the kingdom of the ten tribes, "humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem." It was extraordinary in its duration; for the feast of unleavened bread was kept fourteen days. Solomon, indeed, held a feast of the same duration. The first seven days, however, were the feast of the dedication of the temple, and the other seven, the feast of tabernacles. But, in this instance, the passover feast itself was prolonged for fourteen days.

According to the original institution of this feast,† the solemn preparations for keeping it were to begin on the tenth day of the first month. This law of the God of Israel was not forgotten on this solemn occasion. We are informed, chap. xxx. 13, "That there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread, in the second month, a very great congregation." In the days of Ahaz, the holy city was defiled, as well as the sanctuary:—"And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem," chap. xxviii. 24. It was necessary that the city of their solemnities should be cleansed, as well as the sanctuary of the Lord. Accordingly we are told, chap. xxx. 14, "And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron." This was the work of the congregation. Though none but the priests and Levites could be employed in cleansing the sanctuary, any person might stretch forth his hand to demolish an idolatrous altar, and carry forth the materials of which it was constructed, to the brook Kidron. This great and laborious work they could not have accom-

plished on the day of their solemn feast; and, therefore, they must have performed it, together with their other necessary preparations, on the days which intervened between the tenth and the fourteenth; for it is added, ver. 15, "Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month," and celebrated this solemn and extraordinary feast to the Lord their God.

There were exactly twenty-four days between the sixteenth day of the first month, when the cleansing of the sanctuary was finished; and the tenth day of the second month, when the services relative to the passover feast commenced. If the profanation of the temple by Ahaz be an emblem of the popish pollution of the Christian church; if the cleansing of the temple, by Hezekiah, is an emblem of the church's purification from the corruptions of Antichrist; and, if Hezekiah's solemn passover be an emblem of the Christian millennium, may not those twenty-four days, which elapsed between the cleansing of the temple and the keeping of that passover, be an emblem of the twenty-four years, which will intervene between 1843, when the church will be delivered from popery, and 1867, when the blessed millennium will begin? To these ideas I have been led, from a conviction, that, in the words of the angel to Daniel, "Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," there is a most pointed allusion to Hezekiah's cleansing the house of the Lord, as well as a reference to the cleansing of the sanctuary from the profanation of Antiochus, and an ultimate respect to the cleansing of the Christian church from the pollutions of "Babylon the great, the Mother of harlots, and the abominations of the earth." Since, in the words of the angel, an allusion to Hezekiah's work is plainly made, it cannot be unreasonable to extend the reference to his father's defilement of the sanctuary, to his celebration of an extraordinary passover, and even to the time which intervened between his cleansing the sanctuary, and his celebrating this solemn feast, as an illustration, if not a confirmation, of the opinion which I have been constrained to adopt, concerning the commencement, and the termination of this number.

The view which has now been given of the two thousand three hundred days, furnishes us with much encouragement to believe the truth of the calculations, respecting the other prophetic numbers. Since the Spirit of prophecy has given us a large number, entirely

unconnected with the rest, terminating twenty-four years before that year to which the other numbers conducted us for the commencement of the millennium, and pointing out a different and most important event which must happen before that happy time; we certainly must have some further grounds to believe either the truth, or the great probability of these conclusions. There is nothing in our former calculations that needs to be corrected, but the time that was mentioned for the termination of the vials. This was fixed for the year 1866, and their duration, from 1792, when it is supposed they began, was stated to be 74 years. From the discovery which Daniel's number of two thousand three hundred days discloses to us, it is evident that they will end when that number expires, and the sanctuary is cleansed, in 1843, and that their duration will be about 50 years. It is not reasonable to suppose, that after Babylon the great is fallen, and the corruptions of popery are removed, that any of the vials of God's wrath will be poured on the earth. Our former view of the conclusion of the vials may still be deemed correct, if their effects are taken into the account. It may be the year 1866, before the nations will be completely recovered from the effects of the last plagues. When any great public calamity is inflicted on a nation, its inhabitants feel the effects of it long after the afflictive visitation has been removed. The judgments of the last vials are represented by such terrific figures, as may convince us, that the misery they will inflict on the nations will be exceeding great, and that their effects will be felt for a long time.

Since the publication of the first Edition of these Essays, the following objection to the accuracy of the calculations of the prophetic number of 2300 days, has been suggested:—If the fall of Antichrist, or the cleansing of the sanctuary, happen in 1843, that prediction concerning him will not be fulfilled, “And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months,” or 1260 years, *Rev. xiii. 5*; but he will come to his end 24 years before this period elapse.

To this it may be answered, that an object may be said to continue, till the distressing effects, which its existence and operations have occasioned, shall entirely cease. These will not terminate completely till 1866. A system may also be said to continue, till that state of things, which is appointed to come in its place, is fully established. This will not happen till 1867. Since the nations

will suffer by the bitter fruits of popery till 1866, and since the Church's millennial state will not be consolidated till 1867, this prediction will be fulfilled in this way; and power will be given unto him to continue, in these respects, till the time mentioned in the vision expire. Besides, as his rise was gradual, so he must fall by degrees. Though the removal of the antichristian corruptions in the church, signified by the cleansing of the sanctuary, may be accomplished in 1843, the influence of this enemy in the great city, or popish nations, will not entirely cease, till 1866. This is beautifully illustrated in the Old Testament emblems of these solemn transactions, which have been already mentioned. Though the sanctuary was cleansed on the 16th day of the first month, the royal city was not purged from idolatrous altars, both for sacrifice and incense, till the expiration of 24 days after the purification of the sanctuary. On this account, the abominations of Ahaz may be said to have continued, till the very eve of that most solemn Passover, which emblematically represented the Christian millennium. In like manner, by the dying convulsions and the remaining influence of Antichrist among the nations, which may remain through those 24 years, the vision of John will be exactly verified; and power will be given unto him to continue forty and two months. As those 24 years do not belong to the period of the millennium, and as no time intervenes between the total and final fall of Antichrist, and the millennial era, they must be reckoned to the reign of the beast, even though, during that time, his power may be very weak, and his cause exceeding low.

One great difficulty, which opposes our belief of those calculations, arises from the shortness of the time that remains for accomplishing those great operations, which may be expected on the earth, before the church can enter into her millennial state. It must be acknowledged, the time is short. From the present time, 1820, there are only 23 years, till the final fall of Antichristian popery, at the cleansing of the sanctuary; and 47 years, till the millennium's commencement.* It is not unreasonable to suppose, that this bles-

* To show the agreement between these calculations, from the sure word of prophecy, and the conclusions which politicians and philosophers have made, from viewing the aspect of the times, we give the following quotation from the *Edinburgh Review*, No. LXVI. page 403.

"There is another consideration, also arising from the aspect of the times

sed state of the church may begin, in some nations of the world, or quarter of the globe, before it make any extraordinary appearance in some other parts of the earth.

For the removal of this difficulty, I have nothing to say, but the words of the prophet to the Lord, and the Lord's words to his pro-

before us, which should go far, we think, at the present moment, to strengthen these bonds of affinity" between the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and the United States of America. "It is impossible to look to the state of the Old World, without seeing, or rather feeling, that there is a greater and more momentous contest impending, than ever before agitated human society. In Germany—in Spain—in France—in Italy, the principles of Reform and Liberty are visibly arraying themselves for a final struggle with the principles of Established Abuse,—Legitimacy, or Tyranny,—or whatever else it is called, by its friends or enemies. Even in England, the more modified elements of the same principles are stirring and heaving, around, above and beneath us, with unprecedented agitation and terror; and every thing betokens an approaching crisis in the great European commonwealth, by the result of which the future character of its governments, and the structure and condition of its society, will in all probability be determined. The ultimate result, or the course of events that are to lead to it, we have not the presumption to predict. The struggle may be long or transitory—sanguinary or bloodless; and it may end in a great and signal amelioration of all existing institutions, or in the establishment of one vast federation of military despots, domineering, as usual, in the midst of sensuality, barbarism, and gloom. The issues of all these things are in the hand of Providence and the womb of time; and no human eye can yet foresee the fashion of their accomplishment. But great changes are evidently preparing; and in fifty years—most probably in a far shorter time—some material alterations must have taken place in most of the established governments of Europe, and the rights of European nations been established on a surer and more durable basis. Half a century cannot pass away in growing discontents on the part of the people, and growing fears and precautions on that of their rulers. Their pretensions *must* at last be put in issue; and abide the settlement of force, or fear, or reason

"Looking back to what has already happened in the world, both recently and in ancient times, we can scarcely doubt that the cause of Liberty will be ultimately triumphant. But through what trials and sufferings—what martyrdoms and persecutions it is doomed to work out its triumph—we profess ourselves totally unable to conjecture. The disunion of the lower and the higher classes, which was gradually disappearing with the increasing intelligence of the former, but has lately been renewed by circumstances which we cannot now stop to examine, leads, we must confess, to gloomy auguries as to the character of this contest; and fills us with apprehensions; that it may neither be peaceful nor brief."

phet, concerning the Jews' return from Babylon, and their prosperity in their own land, after that return :—" Ah, Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth, by thy great power and stretched out arm ; there is nothing too hard for thee. I am the Lord, the God of all flesh : Is there any thing too hard for me ?" * If these calculations are correct, which it would be presumption to affirm positively, the Lord can easily accomplish the work, in the time that remains for its performance. But, if there is some mistake in them, we may be assured, that he will fulfil to his church his gracious promise :—" I, the Lord, will hasten it in his time." Those scripture calculations are so probable; the means which are now employed, for converting the nations, are so various, extensive and successful ; and the operations of God's providence, in many lands, are so alarming, as to encourage the hope, that some extraordinary things will soon be accomplished among men. Every one, therefore, who has an ear to hear, should endeavour to hear that Divine call, " Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

* Jer. xxxii. 17, 27.

ESSAY II.

ON

THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO INQUIRE INTO THE CHURCH'S DELIVERANCE.

It is the duty of Christians, in this generation, to inquire into the things that belong to the church's deliverance. Concerning the empire of ancient Babylon, Isaiah the prophet, chap. xxi. had a grievous vision declared to him. With this proclamation the vision ended, ver. 9,—“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.” As that empire brought the church into captivity, and as the church was delivered when it was brought down; it was a special type of the Roman Antichrist, who is called by its name, and whose fall is proclaimed in the same manner:—“And after these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily, with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” *

After Isaiah had received the vision concerning Babylon, he was favoured with the burden of Dumah, ver. 11, 12. In this vision, a voice called to him out of Sier:—“Watchman, what of the night?” To shew the importance of the question, and the inquirer's concern to obtain an answer, the call is repeated. The answer is given in those words;—“The morning cometh and also the night.” The morning light shall dawn for the deliverance of Christ's church, and a night of darkness shall fall down upon his enemies. Antichrist's day shall become dark with night; and the church's shadow

of death shall be turned into the morning. The last part of the vision contains the Watchman's advice:—"If ye will inquire, inquire ye; return, come." To this advice it is both our duty and our interest to attend carefully. If we neglect this duty, we will sin against God, that day will come on us unawares, and we will be unprepared, both for the good and the evil which may either precede or follow it. But if we perform this duty, we will be found in the way of the Lord, that day will not come on us as a thief, and we will be enabled to endure the sufferings, and to rejoice in the blessings which may accompany it. In order to excite Christians to this exercise, and to assist them in the performance of this duty, the few following thoughts are submitted to their consideration:—

Respecting the church's deliverance, there are five important things, which are, to every Christian, legitimate objects of inquiry:—

They ought to inquire into the nature of this deliverance. It is an appointed deliverance. It has its origin in God alone. It belongs to the things which were fixed in his eternal councils, which are faithfulness and truth. It is a predicted and promised deliverance. The Divine decree concerning it, has been declared to men, in the prophecies and promises of his holy word. It is a blessing which Christ has purchased for his church. By the blood of the Lamb, as the procuring cause, his enemies shall perish, and his friends will overcome. It will be accomplished suddenly. In reference to it, he says,—“Behold, I come as a thief.” It will be a complete deliverance. From every part of her wilderness sufferings, the church will be set free; and to every part of her promised felicity, she shall be advanced. O! what a joyful deliverance will it be! For, in that day shall this song be sung, “Alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.”

Christians may inquire into the means by which it will be accomplished. These will be mercies and judgments; or the accomplishment of promises, and the execution of threatenings, on their respective objects. By diffusing light in his church, enlarging her extent and numbers, purging away her corruptions, filling her with comfort, blessing her with unity, and sanctifying her furnace of afflictions, the Lord will deliver his church. In sending his word through the world, bestowing education on its inhabitants, favouring

them with the preaching of the gospel, the pouring out of his Spirit, and the communications of his grace, the Lord will bring the darkened nations into the kingdom of Christ. When God is bestowing those mercies on many, he will, at the same time, execute his judgments on the enemies of his kingdom. As these are the objects of the last plagues, the vials of his wrath will be poured on them with wars, famine, and pestilence; with earthquakes, revolutions, and strokes from the hand of God, they shall be visited, till they are consumed. This system of means will resemble the pillar of fire and cloud, which stood between the tribes of God and the army of Egypt, when both were marching in the Red Sea. It will beam the light of day on the church of Christ, and will bring the darkness of the darkest night on his enemies; till the former are highly exalted in honour and privileges, and the latter are brought low into destruction.

Christians are authorized to inquire into the time when this deliverance shall be effected. God has given us such a revelation of this in his word, as brightly displays his omniscient knowledge, wisdom, sovereignty, and goodness. In its investigation, this revelation calls for the exercise of all our natural, acquired and spiritual endowments. So long as our researches are directed by the Scriptures, conducted with prudence and humility, and expressed with moderation, they will be useful to ourselves and others. Since it is a great blessing to be among the wise who understand the times, and an awful misery to be among those who do wickedly, and will not understand them; it must be our duty to acquire that knowledge of them which is competent to us, with respect to things that are future.

Into the signs which indicate the approach of this deliverance, Christians should also inquire. That there will be such signs is evident, from Christ's declaration and promise to his church,—“And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars; on earth, distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.” * If there were signs of the approach of Jerusalem's destruction, and the slaughter and dispersion of the Jews; will there not be visible signs of the coming of that time, when the Jews will be converted, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in, false religion

abolished, and the true religion established on the earth? Our Saviour also illustrates this duty in a short parable, and enjoins it on his followers by a most seasonable advice:—"Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of yourselves, that summer is near at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." * A few years ago the earth was still; and none were signally exerting themselves for propagating Christ's kingdom in the world; but now Christians are roused, the world is active, and great, persevering and successful endeavours are made, in different ways, and in every land, to convey the knowledge of true Christianity to the ends of the earth. We have at present no wars, nor rumours of wars, of one nation against another, as in former times; but there are wars, and rumours of wars, between rulers and their own subjects, which, in their causes and extent, are a new thing on the earth. These are signs, different, indeed, in their nature, the former delightful, the latter terrific; these are signs which the prudent will observe, and the wise will understand.

Christians should also inquire into the effects which the church's deliverance will produce among men. How changed will the heathen nations be, when they shall cast their idols away, and will know and worship the King, the Lord of Hosts! What an alteration will be produced on the votaries of Mahomet, when they, renouncing the absurdities of his system, shall become the followers of the Lamb! What a change will be accomplished on the followers of Antichrist, when they shall know and believe what their church has been, The mother of harlots, and the abominations of the earth; and when they shall join in that song:—"True and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand!" How changed will the seed of Jacob be, when they shall find their Messiah, and shall worship the Lord their God, and David their King! And what an alteration will appear among the churches of the Reformation, when they shall receive the blessing like life from the dead! In their knowledge of God, and of themselves; of Christ, and the way

* Luke xxi. 29, 30, 31.

of their salvation by him; of the Spirit; and his operations on men; of the gospel, and its doctrines and promises; of the law, in its precepts and threatenings; of spiritual worship and holy obedience, which they owe to God; of the moral and spiritual relations, in which they stand to one another, as believers in Christ; and of the hope, which is laid up for them in heaven, shall all the nations of the earth be greatly changed in that day, "When the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

It is of importance to consider the way in which this inquiry ought to be conducted.

We must prosecute this inquiry by searching the Scriptures. These are, in every thing, a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path. By reading them carefully, by fixed meditation upon them, by comparing one part of them with another, and by forming conclusions from them, we must search the sacred oracles. If we neglect any of these things, a criminal and hurtful defect will attach to our searching the Scriptures. In this way we will not succeed in our inquiry. But when we are actively employed in those exercises, some comfortable fruits will be enjoyed, in our performance of this duty. Whether the objects of our inquiry belong to the public, the private, or the personal concerns of religion, our searching the Scriptures to obtain light from them, in any particular case, must be conducted in this way.

In the exercise of much prayer, we must inquire about Sion's deliverance. The intent of the parable that Jesus spake, "That men should pray always and not faint," should be seriously considered. With fervent, persevering, and earnest prayer, we should address the throne of grace, that the Father of lights, may give us light, that Christ may open our understandings, and the Spirit may teach us the things that are freely given to us of God. There is a peculiar beauty in those discoveries which we obtain, either as the answer of prayer, or in the performance of that duty. If we conduct our inquiry into this matter with much prayer, we will pray importunately for this deliverance to the kingdom of Christ. When we are exercised in this manner, the Hearer of prayer may make some discoveries to us concerning the things which relate to her deliverance. When Daniel was engaged in fasting and prayer for the church's liberation from her captivity in Babylon, he was favoured with a

glorious revelation concerning the salvation of the church, by the coming of Jesus who saves his people from their sins. If we would inquire by prayer about the deliverance of the church, let us earnestly pray for that blessing to her, that we may obtain the desire of our hearts about the things that belong to it.

We must also inquire into those things with deep humility and self-denial. If we come to the throne of grace, in the pride of our own wisdom and research, rather seeking God's consent to our own imaginations, than his counsel to discover to us his holy will, we will greatly dishonour God, pervert this religious duty, and wound our own souls. But if we inquire with self-denial and humility, we will be disposed to say,—“Surely we are more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man; we have neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the Holy;” accompanying this confession with the prayer of Job, “What I see not teach thou me.” Gratitude to God for the discoveries he has made to us, and a resolution to wait on him for further instruction, belong to the genuine exercise of this humility. Since his judgments are a great deep, and his ways past finding out, we should approach them for the purpose of investigating them, with humble reverence and godly fear. Were our hearts duly affected with the Divine majesty, wisdom, and holiness, and with a conviction of our meanness as creatures, and our vileness as sinners, we would prosecute every inquiry into the things of God, with humility and self-diffidence.

We must conduct this inquiry in the use of those means, to which, in the Providence of God, we may have access. Our attendance on the public ordinances of Divine worship is one of those means. If we would inquire, we must inquire in his temple. When the Psalmist was in distress about the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflicted condition of the saints, the public ordinances were the means by which he obtained relief:—“When I sought to know this, it was too painful for me. Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.”* If we would succeed in our religious inquiries, either about the church's deliverance, or the prosperity of our own souls, we must go and do likewise. A careful perusal and consideration of what has been published on those subjects, by

* Psal. lxxlii. 16, 17.

these men who have directed their attention to the investigation of them, belong also to those means. This, however, must be done with caution, lest we be led astray. Christians must try the spirits, whether they are of God, or agreeable to his word, and endeavour to distinguish between good and evil in human productions. Religious conversation with those Christians, who have made the things that relate to this matter, the object of their concern, is also a mean which should be improved for helping us in this inquiry:— “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one with another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name.”* In this exercise, whether stated or occasional, the saints have often received consolatory discoveries, both of the church’s present duty and promised deliverance.

In this inquiry, Christians must observe the works, as well as they must search the word of the Most High God. A threatening is denounced against those who neglect this duty. “Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operations of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.”† A blessing is promised to them that perform it. “Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.”‡ As the operations of the Lord’s hand for the last thirty years have been exceedingly remarkable; so they still continue to be worthy of our most attentive consideration. We must constantly consider them as the doings of the Lord, in the execution of his purposes; and must never indulge the atheistical thought that they are a chance that has befallen us. Divine providences ought to be contemplated, in those things among men by which they have been occasioned; in the manner of their commencement, whether sudden or gradual, unlooked for or expected; in their nature, whether judgments or mercies to men, from the Governor of the nations; in their progress, if they are increasing or diminishing; in their tendency, whether they are calculated to weaken or increase, either the kingdom of Christ, or that of his enemy; in their effects, or what events they have already produced; and in the places where they have happened, either in the kingdom of Antichrist, or where Christ’s church is established, either in the dark

* Mal. iii. 16.

† Psalm xxviii. 5.

‡ Psalm cvii. 43.

places of the earth, or among the seed of Israel. Such an observation of Divine providences will both direct and encourage us in this inquiry.

In the exercise of faith, hope, and desire, this inquiry ought to be prosecuted. We must believe that glorious things are spoken of the city of our God. Our faith of the church's prosperity must be founded upon a Divine testimony. Many of these are contained in the Scriptures.—From every one of them, we may be assured, that the time will come, when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and when, to our Redeemer shall be given dominion, and glory; and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, shall serve him. Doubts of this may hinder our inquiry; but an assured belief of it will quicken us to this investigation. A lively hope of this blessing must also prevail in our hearts. The steadfastness of our hope of the church's deliverance will bear some proportion to the strength of our faith in it. If we truly believe that this blessing is promised to the church, we will earnestly expect its accomplishment, and this hope will influence our minds to inquire after it. With earnest desires of this mercy, we should search into the things which this deliverance contains. Having the faith and hope of any good, it will immediately become the object of our desire. A mere opinion about this deliverance may exist in our mind, without producing any desire of it; but the steadfast faith and hope of it, will create and increase vehement desires. As persons inquire into the objects of their desire, so those desires will quicken our inquiry into the church's deliverance.

To conduct this inquiry aright, we must wait and watch for the salvation of the church. Respecting this great blessing, the former of those exercises is mentioned by the prophet Daniel, and the latter by the apostle John:—"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the one thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."* "Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments."† Those who wait, must wait with patience; and those who watch, must watch with care. A waiting and a watchful frame, for this coming of the Lord, is the duty of those who inquire after it. To determine us to study this frame,

* Dan. xii. 12.

† Rev. xvi. 15.

the Spirit of God, both by the prophet and the apostle, declares that those who attain it are blessed. While misery shall fall on those who neither wait nor watch for the church's deliverance; blessedness shall be on the heads of those who wait and watch for the coming of their Lord.

If we prosecute this inquiry in an acceptable and profitable manner, we will endeavour to continue in all those things, unto the end. Every one of them should constitute a part of the Christian's habitual employment. Both on the Lord's day, and on the other days of the week; whether we are engaged in religious duties, or in our lawful employment; whether we are in the days of youth, or in advanced life; and whether we are in prosperity or adversity, either temporal or spiritual, it is our duty and interest to prosecute this inquiry. Desisting from it for a time, will darken our prospects, weaken our concern, and strengthen our indifference about this great and promised blessing. But by a patient continuance in this part of well-doing, Christians will glorify God, and obtain preparation for all the events of providence.

When Christians are endeavouring to inquire into this object, and are striving to conduct their inquiry in the way that has been described, they must exercise an humble, and constant dependance on their Lord, who has said,—“Without me ye can do nothing.” Not in their own strength, but in the strength of the grace that is in Christ, they should begin and carry on this inquiry, and all their other religious duties. Let us look to him, that he, by his word and Spirit, may give us direction and success in this matter, encouraged by his own promise,—“But the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

There are many things from which Christians should return, if they would religiously inquire into the things which respect the deliverance of the church.

They must return from all sin in their hearts and lives. The Lord's words to Ezekiel, chap. xiv. 1, 2, 3, verses, prove this truth:—“Then came certain of the elders of Israel unto me, and sat before me. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them?" In verses 7, 8, the Lord states this matter again, and adds to it an awful threatening:—"For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will answer him by myself. And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord" These alarming words, which describe the condition of hypocritical and presumptuous inquirers, should assure us that it is sinful and dangerous to inquire into the ways of God, while our hearts are impure, and our lives are unholy. If we would be accepted in this duty, and profit by it, we must, through the Spirit, crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts; and put away sin far from our tabernacles. As the Lord is an holy God, and the duty of inquiring about his church is an holy exercise; we cannot have sanctified success in it, if we do not endeavour, by Divine grace, to be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness.

Sincere inquirers into the church's prosperity must return from their neglect of religious duties. If we often neglect the secret duties of the closet, the private duties of the family, and the public duties of the sanctuary, we cannot with humble and holy confidence, present ourselves before the Lord, to inquire of him. He who neglects the duties of religion, "separateth himself from God" indeed. If we desire to inquire aright, we must bring all the tithes of religious duties into the Lord's store-house, and prove him therewith; and, by making scriptural discoveries to us, he will pour out to us a blessing. These duties are the honoured means, by which light comes to us from the Father of lights, in all our spiritual inquiries. Is it, therefore, any wonder if we, in the neglect of those duties, wander in darkness, and have no light to guide our feet into the ways of peace and comfort? Those who wait upon the Lord in the performance of all commanded duty, will obtain from him those discoveries which will give satisfaction to their souls.

Inquiring Christians must also return from their want of religious

exercise, either in their habitual frame, or in their performing the duties of Divine worship. An holy frame is required of us at all times :—" Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day," is a Divine command, which binds our consciences. If we are called to the habitual exercise of reverence and godly fear; we must also be obliged, by the same authority, to maintain the daily exercise of every other Christian grace. In the continued exercise of them, true spiritual mindedness consists. By a life of faith, love, hope, humility, godly sorrow, resignation, patience, joy and peace, we will rank among those persons concerning whom it is inquired,—“ Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the powders of the merchant?” But if this frame of spirit is neglected, and a wandering, carnal, and untender disposition is indulged, how unfit shall we be for inquiring into the deliverance of Sion ! If in our daily walk, much more in the immediate acts of Divine worship, we must abandon this deranged and unholy frame of mind. What success can we expect, in any inquiry at the throne of grace, if we possess that degraded character, which is described by the prophet, and mentioned by the Saviour :—" Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me?" * Against this wretched frame we must watch, and from it we must speedily turn away, if we would successfully inquire in the Lord's temple.

We must also subdue our worldly dispositions, and return from their prevalence over us; if we would religiously inquire after the welfare of Sion :—" If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." † God has no complacency in him, and he has no delight in God. To persons in this situation, the church's deliverance cannot be a matter of any spiritual interest. As the prevalence of a worldly spirit disqualifies us for making this inquiry, so it will render us careless about it. If the world is our chief good, we will see no beauty in that object which the prophet mentions,—“ Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen on thee.” If the love of the Father is not in us, we cannot love his church, nor inquire about her prosperity. We

must, therefore, overcome the reigning power of all worldly lusts, and contemplate the church's interests in all their importance, that we may religiously inquire after her destinies.

Those who would conduct this inquiry aright, must return from their indifferency about the accomplishment of Divine promises, concerning the coming of Christ's kingdom in the world. How can we be zealously affected about this inquiry, while we are indifferent to its most glorious results? The coming of this kingdom will bring such glory to God, such honour to Christ, and such salvation to men, as will justify Christians for having their hearts filled with the earnest desire of its approach. The coming of this kingdom will fill the earth with physical good; the rational creatures with intellectual and moral good; the church with spiritual good; and will bring multitudes in all nations to enjoy perfect and everlasting good in the world to come. Those who are disposed to say with all their hearts in their supplications at the throne of grace,—“Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” are prepared to inquire about the church's deliverance; but those who care for none of those things, are estranged from this important duty.

Christians, in their prosecuting this inquiry, must also return from the want of zeal for the fall of the kingdom of Satan among men. This kingdom appears in the world in different forms, and in many things. There are existing on the earth the Heathenish, the Mahometan, the Popish, and the Jewish forms of that kingdom. It appears among men in doctrinal errors, superstitious worship, unscriptural administrations, profanity, infidelity, immorality, tyranny, oppression, seditious tumults, and gross ignorance. Our zealous concern should extend to all those abominations, that they may perish from the earth. It was a glorious prospect that Jesus had when he said,—“I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” This sight will be delightful also to his followers. As they see it, by faith, in the promises; so they long, and wait, and cry that it may be realized, by the grace and providence of God. While this zeal will enlarge the Christian's concern about the deliverance of the church; the want of it will damp the spirits of men, darken their minds, and pervert their affections, with respect to this necessary duty. Did we know and consider, in a religious way, what this

kingdom is, either as it prevails in the world or works in the heart, we would be ashamed before God for our want of zeal for its ruin.

When making this inquiry, we must, in our public profession of religion, turn from every thing that God will destroy, when he comes to deliver his church. All doctrines, all modes of worship, and all the parts of ecclesiastic administrations, which have not a warrant in the word of God, are plants which our heavenly Father hath not planted; and, therefore, he will cast them out of his vineyard. These things have been brought from the Antichristian soil, and sowed in Christ's church by an enemy. In that profession we make of religion, we must beware of giving any practical approbation of those things. The Redeemer's honour and our own safety require this. We cannot glorify him as we ought, if we do not observe all things that he hath commanded, and turn away from human traditions, and the commandments of men. If we retain, in our profession of religion, any thing that is Antichristian, we expose ourselves to some part of her hail, to some concussions of her earthquake, to some roarings of her thunder, to some flashes of her lightning, and to some participation of her plagues. If we are involved in any popish abominations, we cannot make comfortable progress in the great inquiry about the church's deliverance. We have a very alarming and instructive instance of this, in Ezek. xx. 1, 2, 3:—“And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and sat before me. Then came the word of the Lord unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Are ye come to inquire of me? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.” What is the reason of this most repulsive answer? In the following part of the chapter, the causes of it are stated by the Lord himself. He mentions the provocations of their fathers in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, by departing from his statutes and ordinances, and by adopting the corruptions of the nations around them. He also charges that generation with following the ways of their fathers. On this account, he renews the awful declaration, ver. 31,—“And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you.” In the same way, those

Christian churches, which have laid aside some scriptural attainments of their reforming fathers, and have embodied in their system various corruptions which have originated with Antichrist, place themselves in a situation, which mournfully resembles the condition of those Jewish elders, and of that generation of the house of Israel.

Those who would inquire about the church's deliverance, must return from their inattention to death, judgment, and a future state. These are awful and certain things, with which we are all concerned. If our minds are not impressed with them, we must be in a very improper frame for making this inquiry. If we do not frequently remember our latter end; if we do not consider, with deep interest, that we must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; and, if we do not meditate on the world to come, and prepare for it, we must be in a most deplorable state of incapacity for inquiring of God concerning the church's prosperity. Unconcerned about our own salvation, how we can either possess or exercise a proper desire, to inquire about the church? That we may be prepared for this duty, and furnished with right inducements to the performance of it, we must often remember that it is appointed unto us once to die; that we must receive one of the final sentences, at the last judgment; and that we must go away from the place of judgment, either into everlasting punishment, or into life eternal. Habitually affected with those solemn things, we will live a life of faith on the Son of God, we will study holiness in heart and life, and we will be prepared for this inquiry, and for all other religious duties.

There are several objects to which we must frequently come, that we may successfully conduct this inquiry into the church's deliverance.

Christian inquirers must come to Christ. Our constant warrant for this exercise, is contained in his own invitation:—"Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The daily exercise, which all Christians should study, is found in those words of the apostle Peter:—"To whom coming as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious." This duty consists in the exercise of our faith, receiving Christ, with all our heart, in his person, offices, righteousness and fulness. It is the very life of practical religion, when the Christian

is enabled "to come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel." Faith's cleaving to the Lord Jesus is the fruit and evidence of our vital union to him, the happy token of the Father's drawing us to him, and the sure proof of the Spirit's saving manifestation of him to our souls. The Christian comes to Christ by faith, either for a general or a particular purpose. It is the former, when he believes in him, that he may be saved in him, with an everlasting salvation. It is the latter, when he receives and rests on him, that his grace may be made sufficient for his soul, in any temptation, duty or trial. As faith is constantly required of us, so it ought to be our daily exercise. Destitute of the actings of this faith on Christ, and of the effects which the exercise of it produces on our hearts, we will not obtain that frame which best prepares us for inquiring into the church's deliverance.

Religious inquirers must come to the throne of grace, and to God, the judge of all sitting on it. Christ is our way to the Father:—"I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." In every act of our faith on the Mediator, we come to the Father, and believe in him as our God, reconciled to us in Christ. In all their approaches to God, believers enter into the holiest, and this entry is made by the blood of Christ:—"Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." When Christians inquire in the Lord's temple, they come even unto his mercy-seat, crying for direction, waiting for his counsel, and opening their hearts to receive his merciful communications. At such a time, they are disposed to say:—"O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me into thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." Abounding in this exercise, believers are well prepared for inquiring after the salvation of Sion.

Christians must also come to the seven Spirits, which are before his throne. The holy and eternal Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and shews them to us, guides the saints into the knowledge, belief, and improvement of all truth. Divine predictions and promises were given by His agency:—"For holy men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Predictions and promises, respecting spiritual objects, can be properly understood by those only, who are favoured with His teaching and influence. For

this reason, he is denominated the Spirit of promise, and the Spirit of prophecy. In all our inquiries into the things which relate to our own salvation, or to the church's deliverance, we must have our dependence fixed on that one and the self-same Spirit, who divideth to every one severally as he will. Since God will deliver his church, by fulfilling his predictions and promises, and since the Spirit has indited them all, it must be the desire of all who inquire into those things, that the Lord would pour out his Spirit unto them, and make known his words unto them. Careful endeavours, on the one hand, to avoid quenching, grieving, or resisting him in his operations; and, on the other hand, to receive, submit to, and improve his teaching by his holy word, belong especially to the duty of inquiring into the things that relate either to our own everlasting peace, or to the church's prosperity.

That we may inquire aright into those things, it is necessary that we come to God's everlasting covenant. With those who are still under the bond of the broken covenant of works, God will have no fellowship; because they are under the curse, and are alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them. With those who are instated in the covenant of grace, he holds communion; because they are accepted in the beloved, and are renewed in the spirit of their minds. We obtain an interest in this covenant by believing in Christ, who has confirmed it by his blood, and has purchased all its blessings, to them who have received him. By a powerful and gracious act of God, in bringing us within the bond of the covenant, and by our own act of taking hold of it, we become God's covenant children. On the day of their conversion, God makes with his people this everlasting covenant, which is ordered in all things, and sure, and is all their salvation, and all their desire. An interest in this covenant is necessary to our making such an inquiry into those things, as will be acceptable to God, and truly beneficial to ourselves. Persons, who are not within the bond of God's covenant, may have speculations about those things; but, to sanctified contemplations of them they are strangers. As an interest in the covenant qualifies us for conducting this inquiry, so a daily improvement of it, by faith in the Mediator, and in the God of the covenant, will encourage and direct Christians in this exercise.

In prosecuting this inquiry, Christians must attend the ordinances

of God, and worship in the sanctuary. This was David's desire:—
 “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” For what end did he so earnestly desire this privilege? “To behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.”* That he might see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of his God; that he might contemplate the beauty of the Divine perfections, the mysteries of the Divine word, and the glory of the Divine works. Having his soul filled with the majesty of this object, it was also his desire to inquire reverentially in the Lord's temple, concerning all those things which were connected with the Divine glory, his own salvation, and the church's peace and prosperity. Divine ordinances are the appointed means, by which we have access to God's presence, engage in his service, and obtain intimations of his love and favour. In them we worship God, hearken to his voice, and pour out our hearts before him. In our attendance on them, we have an opportunity of inquiring of him, and of receiving his gracious answers. By inattention to Divine ordinances, Christians commit much sin, neglect commanded duty, and deprive themselves of much spiritual enjoyment. If we will inquire into the things which belong to the church:—
 “Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”†

The Christian inquirer must also come to God's holy law, and improve it as the rule of his thoughts, words and actions. Those who make this inquiry, must not cast the moral law, in any of its precepts, or prohibitions, behind their back. They must meditate on God's law, day and night, and delight in its holy commandments, saying:—
 “Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward.” Being delivered from the law as a broken covenant, by their interest in Christ's righteousness, they will receive the law from him, as the Ruler in Israel, and use it for regulating their obedience. An interest in the precious promises, and a title to the blessings which they contain and exhibit, through faith in Jesus, will powerfully determine Christians to purge themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the

fear of God. By this purity in heart and life, Christians will be comfortably prepared for inquiring into the church's deliverance:—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To the man who orders his conversation aright, God will show his salvation, both with respect to himself, and to Christ's church. But to those who are destitute of Christian morality, or Gospel holiness, "God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hastest instruction, and castest my words behind thee."*

Religious inquirers must come to Christ's church, and abide in her communion. Those who inquire after the due order, will join themselves to the disciples, and make the fearers of the Lord their companions. All the instituted ordinances, they will religiously observe. Till Christians are receivers of all gospel ordinances, they do not fully declare themselves as members of the church; and, therefore, cannot be considered as manifesting a becoming zeal to inquire after her deliverance. If they are vitally united to the Head, they should also desire union, in all Divine ordinances, with the members. Till they do this, they neglect one solemn mean of glorifying and enjoying God, of promoting their spiritual edification, and of inquiring into the church's salvation. With respect to every ordinance that Christ has instituted, God has interposed his authority, by express commands, requiring all the professors of his name to observe them. For this reason, all those who would search after the knowledge of God's designs respecting his church, must continue stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Inquirers into the church's deliverance should come to the public profession that is made of Christ's truths, and to the testimony which is displayed for his cause among men. Since the souls that John saw under the altar, were "the souls of them who had been slain, for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;" it must be the duty of every Christian, and of every church, to profess all Divine truths known to them, to display and hold their testimony on their behalf, and against every thing by which those truths are opposed. Since God calls his ancient church "My Witnesses;" and his New Testament church, "My two Witnesses; it must be the

duty of Christians to take their station before God as witnesses for his truths, and to abide in that station, till the Antichristian abominations shall be no more. As Divine truths and ordinances, which Antichrist has corrupted and denied, are the things that God will establish, when the church is delivered, it is both our duty and our happiness, to maintain them in their purity, while we are in the world and church of God. In this exercise, we will stand with the Lamb on the mount Zion, having his Father's name written on our foreheads. When the Lord will build up his church in her millennial purity, the wood, hay and stubble of errors, superstition, human inventions, and the commandments of men, in sacred things, will be burnt up, and these who have maintained them will suffer loss. By searching for the knowledge of Divine truths, adopting them into our public profession, adhering stedfastly to them, and contending earnestly for them, we will both obey Christ's command, and prove our interest in his promise,—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” These Christians, who are holding fast Christ's name, and are not denying his faith, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ; and who endeavour to overcome, by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, will be prepared both for enquiring into the church's deliverance, and for welcoming its approach.

A serious and spiritual inquiry into the nature, the means, the time, the signs, and effects of the deliverance and prosperity of the church, is an important and necessary duty. Some scriptural knowledge of those things, must be a profitable attainment. The causes of our ignorance and uncertainty about them, are found in our indifference and aversion to those inquiries. Were we truly concerned for this knowledge, and diligent in using the means of obtaining it, we would soon acquire such an understanding of those matters, as would give pleasure and satisfaction to our minds. The qualifications which prepare us for this investigation, are of the purest kind. Curiosity, learning, ingenuity, and diligence, are not sufficient of themselves, to conduct us to a spiritual apprehension of those matters. Curiosity may stimulate us to exertion, learning may fit us for research, ingenuity may qualify us to form and support conjectures, and diligence may keep the rest in operation; but the qualifications, which truly prepare the mind for this investigation, are more noble and precious

than these. To persons who do not conduct this inquiry in a religious manner; who do not return from every thing that is dishonouring to God; and who do not embrace, and improve, for their own salvation, the objects which the gospel exhibits to their view, I may say, Let them not think that they shall receive any thing that is truly good from the Lord. But these, who are experimentally acquainted with those religious exercises which belong to the proper manner of conducting this inquiry; who endeavour to turn from that which is evil; and who come and cleave to that which is good, they in this duty, shall obtain satisfaction and comfort to their souls.

The saint's religious exercises, duties and enjoyments, will not be injured, by a careful inquiry into the church's deliverance and prosperity. In this inquiry, Christians are religiously exercised, itself is a commanded duty, and, in the performance of it, they often obtain special enjoyments. The more numerous the objects of their exercise, duties and enjoyments are, the more complete and extensive will be their frames, their service, and their attainments. The person who has been confined, from his infancy, to the district in which he was born, cannot have such knowledge of the country, as the man who has often travelled through every part of it. The word of God is a wide and extensive region, through which believers should travel; and the more enlarged their excursions in it are, the more enriched will they be with its treasures, and acquainted with the objects it contains. Every spiritual object, when religiously improved, has its own practical effect on the believer's heart and life; and, therefore, the greater the variety of these objects is, about which they employ their minds, the more numerous and diversified will be their exercises and enjoyments. The Christian's concern, then, about the interests of Christ's church, cannot be injurious, but will prove highly beneficial to the prosperity of his soul.

To take a lively interest in the success of those means, which the Lord is now employing for the church's deliverance and enlargement, is the duty of all Christians. This concern will produce sincere desires—fervent prayers—inquiries about what the Lord has done—thankfulness for his operations—and pecuniary contributions for the support of this great work.

Christians will sincerely desire that success may attend those means. Their love to God, and his church, will excite those desires. Pity to their fellow creatures, who are in gross darkness,

perishing for want of knowledge, will also produce the same effect. A sense of duty, by the Divine command, will constrain them to desire this blessing. O how many and fervent should our desires be, for the spiritual illumination of men, and the enlargement of the church.

• Earnest prayer must accompany those desires. Without spiritual desires, there cannot be any fervent prayers; and without prayer to God, there will not be any dutiful expression of those desires. Many are the Divine promises which secure to the church deliverance and enlargement. We must carry them to the thrones of grace, in the prayer of faith, and plead for their accomplishment. Admiring the grace of God in giving the promises, we will rely on his faithfulness to fulfil them, and depend upon the power of him, who is able also to perform. The means which God is now employing for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, should encourage us to pray earnestly for this blessing. If our fathers prayed fervently for the church's enlargement, when there were comparatively no means in operation to accomplish it; how aggravated will be our neglect of this duty, when the means that are now used for this end, are so many, so various, so suitable, and so efficacious?

An inquiry after the doings of the Lord by these means, is also incumbent on us. Those persons, whose hearts indite desires, and whose mouths utter prayers to God for the church's prosperity, will be filled with an holy anxiety to hear of the success of any of those means, in any part of the earth, and on any class of its inhabitants. Well authenticated accounts of these are, to Christians, good news from a far country, refreshing to their hearts, as cold water to a weary soul. With what earnest desire should we seek for information about the doings of the Lord, by those means which are intended to dissolve the kingdom of Satan, and to establish the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, and in the hearts of men!

When comfortable information is obtained of the success of these means, joy and praise are suitable to the saints of God. Concerning this success, we ought to say, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." On a survey of the change which has been produced on many, both in their personal and collective capacities, we have already some reason "to sing the song of Moses, the servant of the Lord; and the song of the Lamb, say-

"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Contemplating this auspicious commencement of the day of light, we may exclaim, with joyous and grateful admiration,—What hath the Lord wrought!

Liberal contributions for the support of these means, ought also to be made, by all Christians. The pressure and the confusion of the times, have placed many in a situation of total incapacity to do, in this matter, what they have formerly done, and still desire to perform.—For this cause, and for many other reasons, it should be our earnest desire, that those distresses, together with their causes, may be speedily and effectually removed. In proportion as many are disabled for giving assistance to this great work, those whose external circumstances are less affected, should consider that they are under strong obligations to contribute more liberally; that the defalcation occasioned by the present distresses, may, as far as is possible, be made up. Never did there pass over any generation a season, in which more urgent calls were given to Christians, or more important opportunities presented to them, to glorify God with their substance, and with the first fruits of their increase. The glory of God, the prosperity of Christ's church, the comfort of our own souls, and compassion for the souls of others, unite in demanding this pecuniary assistance, from all the lovers of Christ, of his holy religion, and of the salvation of their fellow creatures. To profess that we are friendly to the circulation of the Scriptures, the conversion of the Jews, and the illumination of the darkened nations, and, at the same time, to withhold our support from those means which are now employed to attain these ends, when this can be done without the surrender of any religious principle, or the approbation of any corrupt system, is certainly a great inconsistency, and a dereliction of a necessary and important duty. For the neglect of this duty, by those who are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is their shame, and who mind earthly things, it is easy to account; but how mysterious is the conduct of those who love Christ, and are zealous for his glory, in refusing to those means for promoting the kingdom of their Redeemer, their countenance and aid? Let us all manifest a proper concern for the church's deliverance, by supporting those exertions which are now made for causing the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad for them, and the desert to rejoice, and

blossom as the rose. You are not called to contrive plans, nor to begin operations. Schemes have already been devised, and operations have been begun; and the suitableness and perfection of both, have been clearly demonstrated, by their astonishing success. But you are called to support those exertions, that they may continue and increase, till the Lord's way shall be known upon the earth, and his saving health among all nations. The contributions of the Israelites, in the wilderness, for erecting the tabernacle, and in the land of Canaan, during the reigns of David and Solomon, for building the temple, are encouraging and instructive examples to us in this great work. Let us go and do likewise. Large sums are collected, for carrying on works of public utility, for executing schemes that are vain and foolish, and even for accomplishing purposes that are immoral and wicked. Shall the friends of national improvement, the lovers of vanity, and votaries of vice, lavish gold out of the bag, to fulfil these designs in which they take pleasure; and shall not the lovers of God, the friends of Christ, and the believers of his gospel, contribute with liberality and cheerfulness, for promoting the prosperity of Christ's church, and the salvation of perishing sinners? How glorious is this object!—How important above all others! O Christians, set your hearts to this work. Engage in it cheerfully, contribute for it liberally, and continue in it to the end, that you may prove yourselves to be among those who are earnestly longing for, and religiously inquiring into, the church's deliverance. As the time seems to be approaching, when the Lord of Hosts will shake all nations, that Christ, the desire of all nations, may come in the glory of his kingdom; and as those means are calculated to introduce that blessed season; let us be conscientious in supporting them, not with a mere trifle annually; but with a contribution corresponding to the magnitude of the object, and to the Divine bounty to us, that he may say to us, at our latter end, on this, and on other grounds;—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

CONCLUSION.

In the former of these Essays, I have stated my opinion concerning Daniel's prophetic number of two thousand three hundred days. If it convey to the reader any information about this important prediction, and produce in his heart any pious exercises about the event that will happen at its fulfilment, and about the church's glory that will follow it, my labour will be abundantly rewarded. If what I have said, may be the mean of drawing to this subject the attention of others, who may be enabled to place it in a clearer light, my labour will not have been in vain. The conclusions to which we are necessarily led, by the manner in which the date of this number is fixed, does not invalidate any of the former calculations in the Discourse on the Prophetic Numbers, or in its Appendix; but has rather a tendency to establish them.

The number of the beast, 666, distinguished from the number of his name, states the age of the Roman empire, from the time it became an Asiatic state, till the time it identified itself with the great Ecclesiastic apostacy. It is not the number of the beast, but the number of his name, over which the saints on the sea of glass obtained the victory. Neither is it the former, but the latter, which entitled men to a license from the antichristian powers to buy and sell. Their meaning is totally different. From the year 183, before Christ, when the Roman empire became an Asiatic state, till A. D. 593, when the emperor Justinian constituted the bishop of Rome the head over all the churches, there are 666 years. From the 60th year before Christ, when the Romans had conquered Asia, till 606, when the emperor Phocas ratified to the bishop of Rome his antichristian supremacy, there are also 666 years. From 593 till 1792 inclusive, we have Daniel's 1260 years, when the judgment began to sit, and the vials to be poured out. From 1792 till 1822, Daniel's number of 30 years is fulfilled. By adding his 45 years to 1822, we are brought to 1867. As the last year in this number belongs to the millennium, it must be taken from it, which gives us 1866. When John's number of 1260 years is added to 606, we are brought to the very same year 1866. The last year of Daniel's 1335 years will be the commencement of the millennium; because he assures us that those who wait

and come to that year shall be blessed. The first year of John's 1000 years, which immediately follows the last year of his 1260 years, will also begin the millennium; and both of these, according to this calculation, will come in 1867.

Daniel's 2300 years, commencing with the 70 weeks, in the 457th year before Christ, will terminate in A. D. 1843, when the sanctuary shall be cleansed from popish abominations. This is 24 years before the millennium begins; and during that period the church will be prepared for entering into her state of prosperity and peace. These conclusions are not the effect of human contrivance; but they are forced upon us by the numbers themselves, viewed in that arrangement in which it is necessary to consider them.

By the latter of these Essays, the attention of Christians is invited to the religious duty of inquiring into the church's deliverance. Advantageous will it be to the reader, if the call is not made in vain. From the conduct of many professors concerning Christ's church, it may be said of her;—"This is Sion, whom no man seeketh after." With respect to many, the apostle's complaint may be renewed:—"for all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." From this spiritual lethargy let us be roused. Let us seriously join in the call which was heard from Seir;—"Watchman, what of the night: Let us renew the call, and wait for an answer. Let us be assured that the morning shall come upon the church, and the night upon her enemies. Let us seek from the Lord a disposition to inquire, and let us engage in this necessary duty. Let us think upon the things into which we are authorized to inquire. Let us meditate on the particulars which belong to the proper manner of conducting this inquiry, reduce them to practice, and experience every one of them, in our own souls. Let us depart from all the evils, from which we are called to return, that we, in making this inquiry, may please God, and edify our souls. Let us endeavour to embrace those objects to which we are called to come, that our labour in this duty may not be in vain in the Lord.

No opinion concerning this duty can be more erroneous, than that which considers it as a work of mere speculation. Every attempt we make to inquire into these things ought to be done religiously, and every discovery we obtain should have a sanctifying effect on our thoughts, words and actions. As the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of

we should earnestly desire to know their meaning. As they were deeply affected and exercised in spiritual exercises after they had received them, so should we be religiously exercised, when the meaning of them is discovered to our minds. In this way, we will honour God, and edify our souls, by inquiring into the church's deliverance.

FINIS.

